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Pulpit & Pew

Research on Pastoral Leadership

ASIAN AMERICAN RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP TODAY: A PRELIMINARY INQUIRY

by Timothy Tseng, et al

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2005

PULPIT & PEW RESEARCH REPORTS



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Research on Pastoral Leadership

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FOREWORD

Much has been made of the impact of the Immigration and Nationality Act Amendments to our nation's immigration policy in the mid-1960s—and rightly so! By eliminating national quotas that had favored European immigration, the Act led to an enormous expansion of global cultures in our midst, and this has changed the complexion of America in numerous ways, not least of which is its impact on religion. As several observers (including the authors of this report) have noted, the result has not been the “de-Christianization” of American religion—the claim that some have made—but rather that American Christianity is being “de-Europeanized.” Surveys reveal that the large majority of immigrants from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America are not adherents of non-Christian religious traditions. Rather, they are Christians, and they bring with them expressions of Christian faith and practice that are deeply flavored by their own native cultures rather than by traditional European influences—English, Polish, Italian, German, Scottish, Greek, and so forth—that have shaped American Christianity in the past.

This de-Europeanization of American Christianity has many consequences for church life, not least of which is in the area of pastoral leadership. An earlier Pulpit & Pew report, *Strengthening Hispanic Ministry Across Denominations: A Call to Action*,¹ provided a perspective on pastoral leadership in Hispanic or Latino churches. The present report looks at pastoral leadership issues in the rapidly growing Asian American and Pacific Islander community. The research team, led by Dr. Timothy Tseng of the American Baptist Seminary of the West, has brought together important insights from a large body of literature as well as from personal experience to introduce readers to the diversity, dynamics, tensions, and challenges facing those who seek to provide leadership for these churches.

I was privileged to be a participant at a conference in Berkeley, California, where an early draft of the report was presented and discussed by a group of Asian American and Pacific Island pastors, laity, theological educators and students who represented Catholic and mainline and conservative Protestant traditions. It was a very important gathering—a “first” in bringing together such a diverse group and giving them opportunity to discuss issues and propose strategies for strengthening Asian American pastoral leadership. For me, who was basically ill-informed about many of these issues, the conference was eye-opening. I believe the report that follows will have this same effect on others, and I pray that it will lead to deeper understanding of this growing segment of American Christianity and to stronger congregations and pastoral leaders. I am deeply appreciative of the work that Dr. Tseng and his colleagues for giving us this gift.

Pulpit & Pew is a multifaceted study of pastoral leadership, both Catholic and Protestant, being undertaken at Duke University's Divinity School with funding from Lilly Endowment Inc. Its purpose is to provide credible research findings about pastoral leadership today and the changes impacting it. Three central sets of questions guide the various studies, including this one:

What is the state of pastoral leadership at the new century's beginning, and what do current trends portend for the next generation?

What is excellent pastoral leadership? What are its characteristics?

What can be done to call forth, nurture, and support excellent pastoral leadership by denominations, congregations, theological schools, and others concerned with the church's ministry?

I commend this report to you.



Jackson W. Carroll, Director
Pulpit & Pew: Research on Pastoral Leadership
Williams Professor Emeritus of Religion and Society

¹ The report was authored by Edwin Hernández, Milagros Peña, the Rev. Kenneth Davis, CSC, and Elizabeth Station. It is available on-line at www.pulpitandpew.duke.edu or in hard copy from *Pulpit & Pew*, Duke University Divinity School, Box 90983, Durham, N.C. 27708-0983.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Collaborative efforts are rather rare among scholars. The art and practice of research and writing are normally solitary practices. But the Asian and Pacific Islander Pulpit and Pew project was from its inception a community affair. Since the beginning, when Dr. Jackson Carroll issued an invitation to the PANA Institute at the Pacific School of Religion to engage this study, to the assumption of the project by the Asian American Center at the American Baptist Seminary of the West, to the API Pulpit and Pew Symposium in Spring 2004 when 50 national leaders gathered to give input to the penultimate draft, this project has been the work of a community deeply concerned about leadership in Asian and Pacific Islander Christian communities. Because this report was forged in communal and col-

laborative settings, I believe that it will make a significant contribution to our understanding of Asian American Christianity.

This report would not have been possible without the initiative and support of Dr. Carroll and the Pulpit and Pew Project at Duke Divinity School. Dr. Carroll's encouragement and patience throughout the process made this project a delightful experience. Mr. D. J. Chuang of the L2

Foundation also deserves special thanks, not only for

the foundation's financial support but also for his enthusiasm for the project. Dr. Fumitaka Matsuoka and Ms. Deborah Lee of the PANA Institute provided invaluable administrative support, particularly by providing facilities and Mr. Titus George to be the project's administrative associate. President Keith Russell of the American Baptist Seminary of the West and President James Donahue of the Graduate Theological Union also generously provided support and encouragement throughout.

Finally, but most importantly, I'd like to thank the study team for the time and energy they devoted to producing this report:

- Antony W. Alumkal. Assistant Professor of Sociology of Religion, Iliff School of Theology (Denver, Col.).
- Dr. Peter Cha. Assistant Professor of Practical Theology, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (Chicago).
- Faustino Cruz, SM. Assistant Professor of Practical Theology and Education, and co-director of the Master of Arts program in Ministry for a Multicultural Church, Franciscan School of Theology (Berkeley, Calif.).
- Young Lee Hertig, Global Studies and Sociology, Azusa Pacific University (Azusa, Calif.).
- Russell Jeung. Assistant Professor of Sociology in the Department of Asian American Studies, San Francisco State University (San Francisco, Calif.).
- Jung Ha Kim. Senior Lecturer in Department of Sociology, Georgia State University (Atlanta, Ga.).
- Sharon Kim. Post-doctoral fellow, Occidental College (Eagle Rock, Calif.).
- Ruth Narita Doyle. Visiting Senior Research Scholar in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Fordham University (New York).
- Timothy Tseng. Associate Professor of American Religious History and Director of the Asian American Center at the American Baptist Seminary of the West (Berkeley, Calif.).
- Fenggang Yang. Assistant Professor Of Sociology, Purdue University (West Lafayette, Ind.).
- Dr. David Yoo. Associate Professor of History, Claremont McKenna College (Claremont, Calif.).

I feel privileged to be associated with such fine individuals throughout the journey of producing this report. Their faith and enthusiasm in the project has made the API Pulpit and Pew report one of my most enjoyable experiences in recent memory!

Timothy Tseng
Berkeley, Calif.



Back row: Timothy Tseng, David Yoo, Fenggang Yang, Peter Cha, Russell Jeung. First row: Ruth Narita Doyle, Tito Cruz, Young Lee Hertig, Jung Ha Kim, Sharon Kim, Antony Alumkal, Titus George

INTRODUCTION

To the American public, the words “Asian American” and “leadership” are rarely connected. It is difficult to recall the last time the media gave sustained attention to any Asian American leader. On the rare occasions when Asian American leaders in industry, education, government, and culture are featured in the media, they usually receive little more than a passing glance. According to the Committee of 100, a group of Chinese-American leaders in business, academics and the arts, boards of large corporations continue to have a “dramatic under-representation of Asian-Pacific Americans.” Low visibility, the “good old boys’ network,” and racial stereotyping continue to render Asian Americans “overlooked talent.”

When “religion” is added to the mix, identifiable Asian American leadership becomes even rarer. Images of Asian religious leadership are usually limited to what appears exotic and stereotypical (i.e., Buddhist monks or Hindu gurus). Clearly more research is needed to better understand the leadership of communities that practice Asian religions. Studies about Asian American Christian leadership are also lacking. Dr. Young Lee Hertig, a member of this report’s consultation team, related her experience of trying to find literature on Asian American leadership:

As I surfed the internet research sites of two major Southern California Universities, I came up with “0” citations under the heading “leadership, Asian American”... I began surfing Amazon.com and found only one book that addresses Asian American leadership... Paul Tokunaga’s *Invitation to Lead: Guidance for Emerging Asian American Leaders*. Then I called a few bookstores around to see if they had Tokunaga’s book in stock. Borders, Cokesbury, and Fuller Seminary bookstores did not have it on their shelves. In the case of Fuller Seminary’s bookstore, the clerk was aware of the existence of the book and informed me that two copies were on order.

Hertig mused “it is noteworthy that both denominational and seminary bookstores do not carry the Asian American Leadership book” especially when one considers how large the Asian American population and churches are in Southern California. She concludes that

ethnic minority literature still is marginalized by the mainstream marketing wheel—including book distri-

bution, purchase, and curriculum... the traditional bookstore still remains highly mono-cultural [though the] online medium has made strides in making ethnic minority writings easily accessible. However, the resources on Asian and Pacific Islander [API] leadership are grossly underrepresented.

The gap in public knowledge about Asian American leadership merely scratches the surface. It is not simply a lack of information about the nearly 13 million residents in the United States who trace their roots to Asia and Oceania. In general, Americans feel ambivalent about Asians and Asian Americans. For instance, in 2000, the Committee of 100 surveyed American attitudes towards Asian Americans and reported that:

One out of four Americans hold “strong negative attitudes” towards Chinese Americans; 23 percent would be uncomfortable voting for an Asian American to be President of the United States; 24 percent would disapprove of inter-marriage with an Asian American; and 32 percent feel Chinese-Americans were more loyal to China than the U.S... Some of the positive attitudes towards Chinese Americans voiced by survey respondents include “strong family values” (91percent), “honesty as business people” (77percent), and “place a high value on education” (67 percent). Yet, the same survey finds that a significant number of Americans would not want an Asian American as a President, CEO, spouse or even neighbor

The committee concluded:

Although we had anticipated that the survey might identify some negative attitudes, we were surprised at the extent and nature of biases revealed. Such negative stereotyping among a significant proportion of the country shows a major bias that impedes equal opportunity and rights for Asian Americans. This threatens not only the Asian American community, but also American society as a whole. Further, the survey findings belie the image of Asian Americans as the model minority with no issues. Though ostensibly flattering, the myth of the model minority is both misleading and harmful. This myth obscures the reality that Asian Americans face negative stereotyping which may impede their career advancement and social acceptance.³

² Edward Iwata, “Boards seat few Asian-Pacific Americans,” *USA Today* (April 14, 2004); accessed at http://www.usatoday.com/money/companies/management/2004-04-14-asian-americans_x.htm

³ *American Attitudes Toward Chinese Americans and Asian Americans* (New York: Committee of 100, 2001) – accessed <http://www.committee100.org>.

In addition to the perception that little is known about Asian Americans because they are newcomers, negative attitudes and stereotypes in the United States also impact the experiences of Asian Americans. Thus any attempt to fill the information gap about Asian Americans must be accompanied by efforts to rectify misinformation about Asian Americans. This report of the Asian and Pacific Islander project of Pulpit and Pew, with its focus on Asian American church leadership, is one such starting point.

INTERPRETING THE ASIAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

Any attempt to discuss Asian American Christian leadership requires clarity about the terms “Asian American” or “Asian and Pacific Islander American.” These terms are used to identify East Asians (Chinese, Japanese, Korean), Central Asian (Pakistani, Afghan, Burmese), South Asians (Indians), Southeast Asians (Thai, Vietnamese, Hmong, Cambodians, Laotians, Filipinos, Malay, Indonesian), and Pacific Islander (Polynesian, Micronesian, Melanesian) peoples.⁴ Though we recognize that careless usage of “Asian American” or “Asian and Pacific Islander American” risks ignoring the rich ethnic, political, and socio-economic diversity of this population and can be a disservice to each group’s unique history and culture, this report shall employ the term “Asian American,” both for convenience and to underscore the term’s original meaning.

“Asian American” originated in the Asian American movement in the late 1960s, which was (and continues to be) aimed at racial justice and political enfranchisement for Asian Americans. Movement leaders argued that the Civil Rights vision of racial equality could not be fully realized if Asian American presence, cultures, and histories were ignored or rendered alien to America. Repudiating “Oriental” as a stereotype-laden label imposed upon Asians, movement leaders crafted the “Asian American” designation to symbolize self-determination and advocate for pan-Asian unity. Over the past 30 years, the Asian American movement has struggled against “Model Minority” or

“Perpetual Foreigner” images associated with the “Oriental” label. Despite increased heterogeneity and fragmentation (due to the diversity of immigrants from Asia since 1965) the movement has made significant strides in Asian American communities and in higher education ethnic studies programs. It is also affecting industry, politics, arts, media, and religion. Thus, while “Asian American” can be an innocuous way to identify people with Asian backgrounds, it should not be separated from its Civil Rights vision.

To most Americans, however, “Asian American” does not evoke a sense of Civil Rights advocacy. The term is usually employed in a culturally descriptive sense accompanied by the image of Asian Americans as “model minorities.” Asian Americans are thus viewed as harmony-seeking, family-oriented, and industrious immigrants who bring the novelty of Asian culture and cuisine to America, but few demands. Racial justice and reconciliation are not strongly associated with Asian Americans. Furthermore, most Christians tend to view Asian Americans as objects of evangelization rather than as partners in ministry with claims to decision making authority and leadership.

Traditional missiology, popular culture, and many Asian American church leaders emphasize the “culturally descriptive” rather than the “advocacy” aspects of the Asian American experience, partly because of a lack of awareness of sociological and historical studies of Asians in the United States. Until recently, sociologists have emphasized the inevitability of ethnic Asian assimilation. Accordingly, even though some “foreign” cultural traits would be retained among the children and grandchildren of immigrants, most would vanish as future generations participate more fully in American life and as some cultural traits are “accepted” by American society. Like European immigrants, ethnic Asian American experiences of discrimination would be temporary, as perceived “foreignness” disappears among descendants.⁵

Some sociologists have criticized this perspective for relying too heavily upon the experiences of European immigrants. The Asian American experience differs from Europeans’, they argue, because their physical features are viewed as racially distinct and not merely ethnically

⁴ A case can be made to include Middle Eastern peoples, but Americans do not usually identify them as Asians. In part, this is a legacy of European Colonialism where the Middle East and South Asia represented Europe’s “Orient.” The American “Orient” was limited to East Asia, the Philippines, and the South Pacific.

⁵ A recent collection of essays which attempt to give a positive, albeit chastened, picture of “assimilation” is Tamar Jacoby, ed., *Reinventing the Melting Pot: The New Immigrants and What it Means to be American* (New York: Basic Books, 2004)

unique. Without denying that acculturation occurs, these scholars believe that Asian Americans share more in common with African Americans because of the socio-political and historical process known as “racialization.” That is, Asian Americans don’t simply “melt” or “blend” into the American mainstream; they are “lumped” into a racial category that paradoxically confines and empowers. Thus, the struggle against racial discrimination and exclusion are enduring realities even for “assimilated” Asian Americans.⁶

Depending on theology, ethnic group, and generation, Asian American Christian leaders vary in their understanding of the significance of race and ethnicity in the lives of their congregants and to their identities as Christians. Moreover, discourse on race and ethnicity is often marked by internal contradictions, as well as divergence from the actual practices of individuals and churches.

One picture of ethnic discourse in immigrant-generation Chinese American fundamentalist churches is provided by Palinkas’ book *Rhetoric and Religious Experience: The Discourse of Immigrant Chinese Churches* (1989). Palinkas argues that the church leaders he observed used a strategy of “identification” between various elements in the Chinese immigrant’s world—familiar and unfamiliar, Chinese and Western, and sacred and secular. The rhetoric of church leaders sought to unify these disparate elements into an integrated, meaningful system of thought and action. One key aspect of this strategy was the identification of Christianity with aspects of Chinese culture, particularly Confucian family values. A second key aspect of the leaders’ rhetorical strategy was the establishment of oppositions: between Chinese Christians and Chinese who are not Christian; between Chinese Christians and non-Chinese; and between Christians and non-Christians. Church leaders described all three oppositions as conflicts between Chinese Christians and “worldly people.” According to Palinkas, these rhetorical oppositions allow immigrants, who are “outsiders” with respect to the larger American society, to transform their identity, “making the immigrants the insiders and the larger society, both in the United States and in China, outsiders” (271).

A contrasting picture of ethnic and racial discourse is in Alumkal’s book *Asian American Evangelical*



Chinese congregation, San Diego, Calif., 1926

Churches: Race, Ethnicity, and Assimilation in the Second Generation (2003), which examines second-generation ministries in a Chinese American and a Korean American congregation in the New York metropolitan area. Alumkal notes the contradictory nature of the discourse around race and ethnicity in both congregations. Individuals at times affirmed the importance of attending an ethnic church, noting that they felt “comfortable” in such an environment, and that their respective churches helped them stay connected with their ethnic communities (which they highly valued). At other times, the same individuals argued that race and ethnicity “do not matter” and that only Christian identity is important. It is also significant that members of both congregations talked about moving toward having multicultural memberships, yet both congregations held on to ethnic practices that would discourage people of other ethnicities from joining. Alumkal argues that the discourse on race and ethnicity emerged in response to several forces: the “color-blind” gospel of American evangelicalism, individuals’ experiences as members of ethnic communities, and the problematic racial location of Asian Americans (who are seen by the dominant culture as “perpetual foreigners” and “model minorities”).

Russell Jeung’s study “Asian-American Pan-ethnic Formation and Congregational Culture” (2002) examines congregations in the San Francisco Bay Area that are not affiliated with a single Asian ethnic group,

⁶ Nazli Kibria, *Becoming Asian American: Second-Generation Chinese and Korean American Identities* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 198-99.

but rather construct a broader “Asian American” identity. Jeung argues that the members of these congregations, who are overwhelmingly American-born and/or raised, are so acculturated that they do not draw group distinctions based on cultural affinities. Consequently, “ministers as cultural entrepreneurs have much say and influence over the construction of this [pan-ethnic] grouping” (216). The study reveals the contrasting ways in which evangelical and mainline Protestant congregations approach their ministries as they follow different understandings of race derived from their religious subcultures. Evangelical ministers are influenced by church growth strategies that involve targeting a “homogeneous unit” of people sharing similar ethnic, class, and generational characteristics. Evangelical pan-Asian congregations thus draw symbolic

boundaries based on the similar family upbringing and professional status of their members. Mainline pan-Asian congregations, in contrast, draw upon the social justice teachings of their denominational hierarchies. These latter congregations “see Asian Americans as a marginalized group in need of empowerment,”

and they focus on issues of racial discrimination and community development (225).

These studies capture some of the ways in which race and ethnicity manifest themselves in Asian American churches. As this literature has continued to expand, it has become clearer how complex and varied the relationships between race, ethnicity, and religious identity can be, and how mistaken were the predictions by certain scholars that Asian Americans’ religious institutions would follow assimilation trajectories similar to those of European American churches from the past.⁷

Historians of the Asian American experience are also critical of an assimilationist paradigm modeled on European immigrant narratives. They remind us that the idea that Asians are a different “race” of people

emerged during the long history of European encounter with Asia. The racialization of Asians in American history before 1965 is seen in Federal immigration and naturalization legislation that excluded Asians and in many State laws that proscribed racial inter-marriage and Asian property ownership. The Chinese Exclusion Act (1882), the proscription of Japanese and Indian Asian immigration (1924), and the banning of Filipinos (despite their status as American nationals) in 1934 illustrate how discriminatory immigration laws defined Asians as a race. Thus, in contrast to European immigrants, Asians were legally defined as un-American, “unassimilable,” and perpetual foreigners—a perception that lingers into the 21st century. Because of these experiences, Asian American history cannot be seen through the lenses of European immigrant history.

But the immigrant experiences of Asians and Europeans share some similarities. Historians remind us that the earliest Asian immigrant experience must be placed within the contexts of European and American global colonialism and expansion in which labor was exploited. American commercial ventures in China and Japan as well as its colonial experiment in the Philippines created opportunities for persons from these countries to immigrate. As early as 1763, Filipino settlement had been established in the bayous of Louisiana by settlers who jumped ship to escape brutalities during the galleon trade between the Philippines and Mexico. Internal unrest and dramatic social changes in China and Japan was coupled by a high demand for cheap labor in the American West to create global “push-pull” factors for Chinese and Japanese immigration in the middle to late 19th century. The first Korean immigrants entered the United States in 1903 as agricultural laborers as were the first few thousand Asian Indians who arrived in 1907. After Chinese, Japanese, Indian, and Korean immigration were banned, Filipinos were recruited to fill the farm labor demand in the 1920s and 30s.

Historians also recall the heroic—and often tragic—efforts of early Asian immigrants to survive and inscribe their stories into the narrative of American history. Before World War II, the Japanese and Chinese populations in the United States reached

Historians remind us that the earliest Asian immigrant experience must be placed within the contexts of European and American global colonialism and expansion in which labor was exploited.

⁷ Lawrence A. Palinkas, *Rhetoric and Religious Experience: The Discourse of Immigrant Chinese Churches* (Fairfax, Virginia: George Mason University Press, 1989), Antony W. Alumkal, *Asian American Evangelical Churches: Race, Ethnicity, and Assimilation in the Second Generation* (New York: LFB Scholarly Publishing, 2003), Russell Jeung, “Asian-American Pan-ethnic Formation and Congregational Culture” in *Religions in Asian America: Building Faith Communities* edited by Pyong Gap Min and Jung Ha Kim (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2002), 215-243.

150,000 and 107,000; Filipinos and Koreans numbered about 40,000 and 10,000. The earliest Asian Indian immigrants numbered fewer than 7,000 and were predominantly Sikh or Muslim. These were known as First Wave Asian American immigrants who came to America before the 1965 immigration act liberalized Asian immigration and ushered in the Second Wave.

Though many Second Wave Asian Americans today experience an unprecedented level of academic and economic achievement, historians remind us that past historical patterns still linger among large segments of disenfranchised Asian American communities and in the “glass ceiling” effect that limits highly qualified Asian American professionals and leaders.

So long as the United States remains a racialized society and so long as American Christianity reflects this reality, race and ethnicity will continue to be a central context (acknowledged or not) for Asian American ministerial identity and vocation. While it is partially true that Asian Americans are floating down into the “sea of inevitable assimilation,” there continues to be the “undertow of racialization” in which they will be viewed as perpetual foreigners. Thus, a missiology that centers on “culture” (or even “multiculturalism”) while ignoring “advocacy” will uncritically perpetuate a unilinear “assimilationist” paradigm. A missiology that embraces the full range of Asian American experience will move beyond debating the inevitability of assimilation to a discussion about its desirability. For example, should second-third generation Asian Americans emulate mainstream American Christianity or should they consciously develop Asian American expressions of faith and worship? Should denominations and seminaries create space for Asian American leadership and theological development? These questions have broad implications not only for denominational missiological strategies among Asian Americans, but also for Asian American church leaders in their ministries among Asian Americans and within the wider Church.⁸

⁸ Due to the history of Asian American ministries and the activities of Asian American caucuses in mainline Protestant denominations, however, many of these denominations have retained policies, program, and budgets that respond to Asian American “advocacy.” Nevertheless, as the Asian American presence increases in Catholic and evangelical circles, there are signs that “advocacy” is being articulated more vocally in their ministry among Asian Americans.

⁹ Paul M. Ong, “Asian American Demographics and Civil Rights,” *aapi nexus* 2:1 (Winter/Spring 2004): 105-128. One of the best study of recent Asian and Pacific American demographics is Eric Lai and Dennis Arguelles, eds., *The New Face of Asian Pacific America: Numbers, Diversity, and Change in the 21st Century* (San Francisco: Asian Week Books, 2003)

¹⁰ *The Asian Population 2000* (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, 2002)

THE DEMOGRAPHIC FACE OF ASIAN AMERICA

Since the Immigration Act of 1965 ended racially discriminatory treatment towards immigrants from Asia, there have been four key demographic trends among Asian Americans: (1) rapid population growth, (2) greater ethnic diversity, (3) a significant shift towards the foreign-born, and (4) increased geographical dispersion away from the West.⁹

RAPID GROWTH DURING THE LATTER PART OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 10,242,998 Asians and 1,655,830 mixed race people with Asian blood live in the United States.¹⁰ The nearly 12 million Asians make up 4.2 percent of the total U.S. population (281,421,906). This does not include the population of Pacific Islanders (874,414) who account for about 0.3 percent of the total population. The Census Bureau projects that the Asian and Pacific Islander population will double to nearly 25 million (7.1 percent of U.S. population) by 2030, and triple to more than 37 million (9.3 percent of U.S. population) by 2050. This continues the trend of dramatic Asian American population growth in the second half of the 20th century (Asian Americans were never higher than 0.5 percent of the U.S. population before 1960).

GREATER ETHNIC DIVERSITY

Before 1965, Japanese, Chinese, and Filipino were the three most identifiable Asian American ethnic groups. Since then, the number of Asian American ethnic groups has proliferated tremendously. By 2000, Asian Indians, Koreans, and Vietnamese can claim the largest percentage of Asian American alongside the other three (see Figure 1). Other large ethnic groups with populations of at least 10,000 include Cambodians, Pakistani, Laotians, Hmong, Thai, Indonesians,

FIGURE 1: MAJOR ETHNIC GROUPS OF ASIAN AMERICANS IN 2000

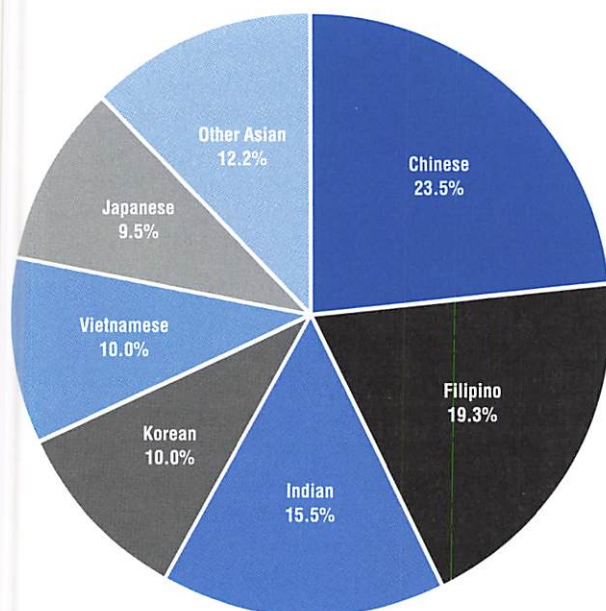


TABLE 1:

**MAJOR ETHNIC GROUPS OF ASIAN AMERICANS IN 2000
(U.S. CENSUS BUREAU: THE ASIAN POPULATION: 2000)**

Total	11,898,828
Chinese	2,879,600
Filipino	2,364,815
Indian	1,899,599
Korean	1,228,427
Vietnamese	1,223,736
Japanese	1,159,531
Cambodian	206,052
Pakistani	204,309
Laotian	198,203
Hmong	186,310
Thai	150,283
Indonesian	63,073
Bangladeshi	57,412
Sri Lankan	24,587
Malaysian	18,566
Burmese	16,720
Other Asian	372,364

Bangladeshi, Sri Lankans, Malaysians, and Burmese (see Table 1).

Furthermore, there is now a significant interracial population. Different ethnic groups have different proportions of people who claim two or more races. Among the largest Asian ethnic groups, it varies from 8 percent among Vietnamese to 31 percent among Japanese, with others in between (see Table 2). This indicates that the rate of interracial marriage is relatively high among Asian Americans. A 1998 study reports that in 1990 overall 21 percent of Asian Americans married outside their ethnic group (probably including across Asian ethnic boundaries).¹¹ Indeed, 40 percent of American born Asian Americans married outside their ethnic group. The growth of inter-ethnic and interracial families in American churches will present new opportunities and challenges for pastoral care.¹²

TABLE 2: PERCENT OF ASIAN AMERICANS WHO CLAIM MIXED RACE: 2000

	% OF MIXED RACE
Japanese	30.7
Filipino	21.8
Chinese	15.4
Korean	12.3
Asian Indian	11.6
Vietnamese	8.3

SIGNIFICANT SHIFT TOWARDS THE FOREIGN-BORN

During first half of the 20th century, the number of foreign-born Asian Americans declined due to immigration restrictions. By 1930, more than 50 percent of Asian Americans were born in the U.S. In 1960 32 percent of the Asian American population was foreign born and by 2000 that figure had risen to 68 percent (7.2 million). According to U.S. Census Bureau projections, foreign born Asians will remain a majority among Asian Americans until around 2040, when there will probably be about 15 million foreign born and about 15 million U.S.-born Asian Americans. Meanwhile, U.S.-born Asian Americans will increase both in absolute numbers and in proportion, and many of them will be farther removed from the immigrant experience.

¹¹ Sharon Lee, "Asian Americans: Diverse and Growing" *PRB Population Bulletin*, 1998 (Vol 53, No. 2).

¹² Peter Yuichi Clark, "Exploring the Pastoral Dynamics of Mixed-Race Persons," *Pastoral Psychology*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (March 2004), 315-327.

INCREASED GEOGRAPHICAL DISPERSION AWAY FROM THE WEST

In the 1960s, 70 percent of Asians lived in Hawaii and California. By 2000, the majority lived outside these two states as Northeastern and Southern states received the greatest gain. However, Asian Americans still tend to concentrate in urban and suburban locales of every major metropolitan area (see Table 3).

**TABLE 3: TEN LARGEST METROPOLISES
IN ASIAN POPULATION: 2000**

	RANK	TOTAL ASIANS*	% ASIAN OF LOCAL POP.
New York, NY	1	872,777	10.9
Los Angeles, CA	2	407,444	11.0
San Jose, CA	3	257,571	28.8
San Francisco, CA	4	253,477	32.6
Honolulu, HI	5	251,686	67.7
San Diego, CA	6	189,413	15.5
Chicago, IL	7	140,517	4.9
Houston, TX	8	114,140	5.8
Seattle, WA	9	84,649	15.0
Fremont, CA	10	80,979	39.8

* includes mixed race with Asian blood.

In addition to these four demographic trends, a number of other statistical data stand out:

Voting: The percentages of naturalized Asian American citizens who are registered to vote increased from 36 percent in 1980, 43 percent in 1990, to 52 percent in 2000. But actual voter turnout has been significantly lower. English language may be a barrier.

Education: Asian Americans have higher educational attainment than other Americans. In 2000, 51 percent of Asian American men and 44 percent of Asian American women earned a bachelor's or graduate degree, compared to 32 percent and 27 percent, respectively, of non-Hispanic whites. But large segments are not enjoying educational or economic success (e.g. many Indochinese refugees).¹³

Income: Asian Americans (again, as a whole) have the highest household income of any American racial group, in part because relatively selective immigration policies favor highly educated and skilled migrants. But this is offset by residency in areas with higher costs of living, families with multiple wage earners, and the perception of a "glass ceiling" in the workplace.¹⁴

Contemporary Asian America is very complex, with demographics revealing both achievement and atrophy. Thus, it will be a challenge to develop and sustain healthy church leaders amidst such ethnic, generational, gender, educational, and economic diversity. Each context will demand its own unique leadership formation and style. The debate over Asian American leadership strategies (i.e., ethnic, assimilationist, pan-Asian, multi-cultural) that emerges from such diversity will continue for the foreseeable future.

ASIAN AMERICAN PULPIT AND PEW PROJECT

Given the lack of published research in Asian American leadership and the ambiguities surrounding Asian American demographics and the interpretation of the Asian American experience, the Asian and Pacific Islander Pulpit and Pew project is a very timely study. Nevertheless, producing this report was quite a challenge. For instance, because Asian Americans are so diverse, the project's consultation team and advisory council had to be selected with sensitivity to the ethnic, language, theological, denominational, gender, and generational spectrum of Asian American Christianity. We were, for the most part, successful at including a broad range of Asian Americans in our leadership.¹⁵

The consultation team met in March 2003 to determine the objectives and process for this report. We concluded that literature review and data collection would be more feasible than conducting original research, given

¹³ Peter Nien-chu Kiang, "Checking Southeast Asian American Realities in Pan-Asian American Agendas," *aapi nexus* 2:1 (Winter/Spring 2004): 48-76.

¹⁴ Diana Ting Liu Wu, *Asian Pacific Americans in the Workplace* (Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press, 1997); Deborah Woo, *Glass Ceilings and Asian Americans: The New Face of Workplace Barriers* (Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press, 2000).

¹⁵ Regrettably, significant groups such as Hawaiians, Samoans, and a number of Southeast Asian and Pacific Island communities were under-represented in this report because of the scarcity of material currently available. It is our hope that the recommendations and future steps will include and involve the Pacific Islander Asian American.

time and budgetary constraints. The report, therefore, would summarize background information about the Asian American Christian contexts and leadership concerns. We decided to concentrate on populations with the greatest available data—namely East and Southeast Asians. For similar reasons, we also chose to focus on Christian leadership rather than engage the full spectrum of Asian American religious diversity. Although data from more recent and non-Christian Asian communities was not readily available, we eagerly anticipate the next generation of research that will broaden our knowledge of these groups. But for now, we hoped to produce a report that would encourage the Asian American Christian community and an interested wider audience to engage in further research.

During the summer and fall, the consultation team conducted a literature review and discovered that very little research on Asian American leadership had been published. A review of Roman Catholic Doctor of Ministry projects and master's theses on church leadership or ministry generated no projects related to Asian American ministerial leadership in the presbyterate or lay ecclesial ministry.¹⁷ Among Protestants and evangelicals, a number of D.Min. dissertations (buried deeply in seminary libraries) or handbooks are available, but were written for very specific contexts.¹⁸ A few unpublished studies were helpful but also very specific in focus.¹⁹

We recognized that numerous sociological studies and D.Min. dissertations of individual Asian American congregations have been written recently. Many are “ground-breaking” studies worthy of the attention of both academic and ecclesial communities. Many members of this project’s consultation team are among the leading scholars of Asian American congregational studies. Nevertheless, because these studies are so narrowly focused on a single ethnicity or committed to social theory, we believed that they would not be immediately helpful for understanding leadership in Asian American Christian contexts.

We then examined recent congregational studies and their relationship to Asian American Christian communities. In general, these studies provide a broader scope and greater immediate relevance for church leaders than the focused sociological or D.Min. research. However, only a few incorporate race and ethnicity into the research methodology²⁰ and those tend to focus exclusively on African American and Hispanic congregations.²¹ Projects that give attention to Asian Americans, on the other hand, are primarily interested in Asian American demographics within settings that are not Asian-specific.

For instance the Hartford Institute for Religious Research’s Faith Communities Today project conducted an extensive survey of 14,301 Catholic, Jewish, Orthodox, Muslim, and Protestant congregations. While historically Black denominations received a separate cat-

¹⁶ Tony Carnes and Fenggang Yang, eds., *Asian American Religions: The Making and Remaking of Borders and Boundaries* (New York: New York University Press, 2004) represents one recent studies which attempts to provide more demographic data.

¹⁷ Databases consulted: OCLC First Search, the Catholic Theological Union, Boston Theological Institute, Catholic University of America, and the Graduate Theological Union. Furthermore research materials on Asian Pacific ministerial leadership, such as data on priests and religious, is presently unavailable at the Center for the Study of Religious Life in Chicago.

¹⁸ For example, Philip Eric Gee, “Case Studies of Mentoring For Ministry in Select Asian Churches” (Dallas Theological Seminary D.Min. thesis, 2003) and InterVarsity Christian Fellowship Asian American Ministry’s *Developing Asian American Leaders in InterVarsity Christian Fellowship* (2nd edition, 1999) and Sang Hyun Lee and John V. Moore, eds., *Korean American Ministry: A Resource Book*. Expanded English Edition (Louisville: General Assembly Council of the Presbyterian Church USA).

¹⁹ *Logos Asian American Ministry Research Paper - Draft* (Dec. 9, 2003) focused on second generation Asian American ministries and leaders in Southern California; *PaLM’s Pastor Survey - First Quarter, 2004* looked at Chinese and Korean American pastors in the New York City Metropolitan region. Thanks to Rev. Anthony So and Rev. Howard Chan for this information.

²⁰ For example, Mark Chaves, et al. “The National Congregations Study: Background, Methods, and Selected Results”, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 1999, 38(4): 458-476.

²¹ For example, the “Congregations, Communities and Leadership Development Project” examined how 15 Philadelphia area African American, white, and Hispanic congregations engage in community service. See Heidi Rolland Unruh and Ronald J. Sider, *Saving Souls, Saving Society: Exploring the Spiritual and Social Dynamics of Church-Based Community Activism* (originally presented at the Religious Research Association annual conference in Boston, November 6, 1999).

egory for analysis, it was not clear how many specifically Asian American congregations responded to the survey. Two survey questions (not included in the surveys of Black congregations) asked for racial demographic data:

- *Participants: Of your total number of regularly participating adults, what percent would you estimate are: American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White, Other*

TABLE 4: PARTICIPANTS IN FACT

	NUMBER	PERCENT
Asian	127	.9%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	24	.2%
American Indian/Alaska Native	80	.6%
Black or African American	2235	16.4%
Hispanic or Latino	269	2%
White	10639	78.1%
Other	73	.5%

Source: <http://fact.hartsem.edu/genfindings/V5.htm>

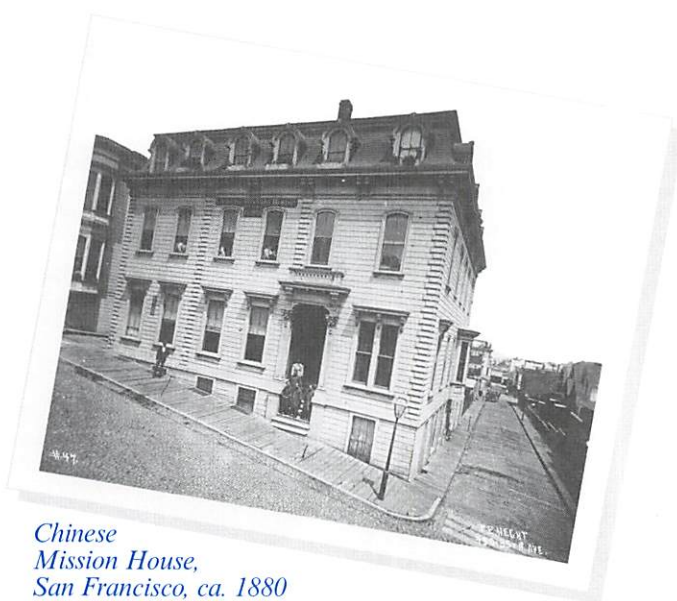
- *Leadership and Organizational Dynamics: Please describe the current, [senior/sole] [clergy person or person in charge of the congregation]. American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, White, Other*

TABLE 5: LEADERSHIP

	NUMBER	PERCENT
Asian	142	1.4%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	40	.4%
American Indian/Alaska Native	143	1.4%
Black or African American	330	3.1%
Hispanic or Latino	236	2.2%
White	9442	90.1%
Other	147	1.4%

Source: <http://fact.hartsem.edu/genfindings/IV2h.htm>

This survey indicates that 1.8% of the congregations that responded had Asian/Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander senior leadership (table 5). However, it was not clear whether table 4 reveals that 1.1% of the



Chinese
Mission House,
San Francisco, ca. 1880

responding congregations were predominantly Asian/Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander or 1.1% of all the membership of all congregations were Asian/Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander. The final report appears to employ the former definition. In any case, the final report makes no commentary about Asian and Pacific Islander respondents.²²

Two projects that have potential to engage a broader study of Asian American congregations may be hindered by their research goals. Both the Multiracial Congregations Project (<http://www.congregations.info/>) and the Religion and the New Immigrants Project (<http://newimmigrants.org/>) give greater attention to Asian American religious communities. However the Multiracial Congregations project's focus on congregations where "no one racial group is more than 80 percent of the people" will exclude a large percentage of Asian American congregations even though many Asian Americans participate in multiracial congregations. As laudable as it is to find solutions to the racial divide in American religion vis-à-vis the study of multiracial congregations, better knowledge of race or ethnic specific congregations is also a necessary part of the racial justice and reconciliation agenda. Similarly, the Religion and the New Immigrants Projects is driven by a positive goal. It seeks to "examine the role of religion in the current immigrant experience in the United States, and how it can be used for the good of the community," i.e. how "religion can help the new immigrant communities integrate with the rest of American society."²³ As with the Multiracial Congregations project, the

²² *Faith Communities Today: A Report on Religion in the United States Today* (Hartford Institute for Religion Research, Hartford Seminary, 2001) <http://fact.hartsem.edu/>; The Hartford Institute for Religious Research's Megachurch Research likewise focuses on factors that ignore specific Asian American issues.

²³ <http://newimmigrants.org/about/>

Religion and New Immigrants Projects, by focusing on such a broad vision, may end up sidelining specific and needed research that focuses on Asian American religious communities.

At the February 2004 consultation team meeting, we decided to rely more heavily upon our own expertise and glean as much as possible from each member's research. We revised the report format so that the following topics would be highlighted:

- Asian Immigrants (or First Generation) Pastoral Leadership
- Second Generation Asian American Pastoral Leadership
- Asian American Women in Ministry
- The Leadership Formation of Asian American Pastoral and Church Leaders
- Institutional and network support for pastors and church leaders

Throughout the report, Protestant and Roman Catholic perspectives will be described separately due to the significant theological, historical, and institutional differences between the two traditions. We are also very conscious of the evangelical and mainline divide within Asian American Protestantism. Nevertheless, the irenic spirit that produced this report attests to the possibility that evangelical, mainline Protestant and Roman Catholic Asian American church leaders may be more similar than different. This ecumenical spirit was evident at the April 22-24, 2004 Symposium where leaders from each tradition gathered to reflect on the preliminary report.

This report will undoubtedly confirm what most Asian Americans in ministry already know anecdotally about their church leadership situation. But it will also identify some new issues that may surprise the reader. In the long run, our greatest hope is that this report will begin a sustained conversation about important concerns facing Asian American mainline Protestant, evangelical and Catholic religious leadership.

Chinese American congregations fielded numerous teams in church league basketball, 1947



CHAPTER ONE: THE CONTEXTS OF ASIAN AMERICAN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

Most Asian American pastors receive their call to ministerial leadership in Asian American Christian communities. Most will develop and exercise their leadership gifts in these communities. Thus the history of Asian American Christian leadership and the level of Christian identification among Asian Americans today are necessary contexts for understanding Asian American Christian leadership.

ASIAN AMERICAN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Though the origins of Asian American Christianity can be traced to the Protestant and Catholic missionary endeavors in the 19th and early 20th centuries, it is important to underscore the “indigenous” character of Asian American conversions and leadership formation. This section will examine the roles Asian American Christian leaders played within the historical interplay between denominational executives, missionaries, and Asian American churches. We can identify three historical patterns of leadership in Asian American churches: Paternalistic missions (1850s-1920s), Conformist Integration (1930s-1960s), and Asian American consciousness (1960s-present).

PATERNALISTIC MISSIONS (1850S-1920S)

Asian American relationships with missionaries and white Christians were complex, requiring sensitivity to both Asian and United States contexts. On one hand, most white Christians opposed Asian immigration and naturalization in the 19th and early 20th centuries. On the other, denominational leaders, missionaries, and a minority of sympathetic local Christians opposed the discriminatory treatment of Asian Americans during this period. Thus, Asian American Christians often worked with missionaries in largely unsuccessful efforts to resist anti-Asian racism. Facing racism at home and Western colonialism abroad, Asian American church leaders were

much more conscious of politics, social injustice, and Asian nationalism.²⁴

Because Asian American churches were small and poor, they depended heavily upon denominational resources and personnel to sustain their ministries. Protestant denominations employed male pastors from Asia to minister to the immigrant communities. Many wives of these pastors were “Bible women”—trained by women missionaries to evangelize Asian women. White missionaries, nevertheless, held greater authority in these Asian American churches. They also played a mediating role between the denomination, the public, and the Asian church. Eventually white women missionaries came to dominate the missions by the turn of the century.

The missionary presence was no doubt vital to the survival of Asian American Christians and their ability to negotiate a hostile social climate. Many Asian and Asian American church leaders would later emulate the piety and personal sacrifice of white missionaries. Missionary women provided role models for Asian American women who would become religious and public leaders. Despite the cultural sensitivity and affection most missionaries displayed, many Asian American Christian leaders were frustrated by the structure and pattern of missionary paternalism. Asian pastors and colporteurs did not receive equivalent compensation or authority.²⁵ Furthermore, as anti-colonialism and nationalism in Asia grew in the early 20th century, Asian American church leaders were pressured to disavow their dependency upon and association with white Christians. These sentiments would have a strong impact upon indigenous Asian Christians (and Asian American Christians after 1965). But in the United States, Asian American Christianity would follow a different course.

CONFORMIST INTEGRATION (1930S-1960S)

Americanization and isolationism marked the 1920s. The 1924 Immigration Act shut the door to Asian immigrants and sharply reduced the Southern and Eastern European immigrant quota. Following a gen-

²⁴ Asian American Christians during this period were predominantly Chinese and Japanese Protestants; Filipino Catholics appeared to have less public leadership roles in the Catholic Church.

²⁵ This pattern varied between Chinese and Japanese church leaders. Unlike the Chinese, male Japanese migrants were able to bring wives (“picture brides”) from overseas until 1924. Japanese congregations were comprised of more stable families than the Chinese missions and thus financially stronger than Chinese churches. Consequently, Japanese congregations were less dependent upon Protestant denominations and their leaders had greater independence during this time.

eration of drastically curtailed immigration, Will Herberg proclaimed that Catholicism, Judaism, and Protestantism now represented “a triple melting pot” of Americanization. Yet, Herberg and others were concerned that beneath this process was a hidden form of Anglo-conformity rather than authentic integration or Americanization.²⁶

By the 1930s, mainline Protestantism was weakened by the modernist-fundamentalism controversies and witnessed a sharp decline in domestic and foreign mission work. To consolidate resources and pursue an ecumenical vision, Protestants attempted to unite small congregations in a geographical location into larger inter-denominational churches. Asian American missions were also encouraged to unite, but only a few “union” churches were formed.

Second generation Asian American Protestant leaders came of age during the 1950s. Better educated than the previous generation, this group led Asian American congregations towards self-sufficiency. But just as Asian American Protestant churches and their leaders started to gain strength, their denominations encouraged these churches to drop their ethnic identification.²⁷ As integration became increasingly viewed as the solution to racial segregation, the formation or perpetuation of ethnic or race-specific congregations was discouraged.

Initially, Asian American church leaders welcomed racial integration. Some found opportunities to serve in denominations. Ministry programs for Asian Americans, such as the Methodist Oriental Conference, were dissolved in the 1950s and 1960s. But by the late 1960s, it became apparent to these leaders that the denominations’ “color-blind” policies would result in the erasure of racial identity without dismantling racism.

ASIAN AMERICAN CONSCIOUSNESS (1960S-PRESENT)

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Asian American leaders in mainline Protestant denominations began to advocate for greater representation and ministry resources. Inspired by the Civil Rights and the Asian American movements, caucuses were formed with the belief that authentic integration and partnership would not occur unless leaders with a strong Asian American consciousness became more vocal. Many mainline denominations responded by creating staff positions and funding to resource the rapidly growing “second wave” Asian immigration population.²⁸ Since the late 1970s, mainline Protestantism has experienced both numeric growth and increased ethnic diversity. By the late 1980s, Koreans, Filipinos, Vietnamese, Asian Indians, Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders have joined the Asian American Protestant mix. Koreans have become the strongest Asian American Protestant group.²⁹

Asian American consciousness among Catholics has also increased over the past two decades. In response to the large influx of refugees and immigrants from Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, Korea and China, Roman Catholic ministry with Asian and Pacific communities expanded dramatically in the 1970s.³⁰



²⁶ Will Herberg, *Protestant—Catholic—Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (University of Chicago, 1955).

²⁷ More research about Asian American Roman Catholic during this time is needed. However, there is indication that Roman Catholics also encouraged the erasure of “ethnic parishes.”

²⁸ Roland M. Kawano, “Asian Congregations from Discrimination to Recognition,” *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches 1995*, edited by Kenneth B. Bedell (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995): 1-5

²⁹ However, bear in mind that denominations emphasize specific Asian and Pacific Islander communities based on historical experience and strength of constituency. While the Korean presence is stronger in the Presbyterian Church, USA than other Asian ethnic groups, the Chinese are the strongest in the Christian Missionary and Alliance, as are the Taiwanese in the Reformed Church of America.

³⁰ The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops include persons with backgrounds from Western Asia, Central Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia in their understanding of Asia (cf. *Asian and Pacific Presence: Harmony in Faith* [Washington, DC: US Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2001])



Filipinos remain the largest Asian Catholic group today, but Vietnamese and other Asian and Pacific Islander groups are growing rapidly. In the 1990s, Asian Pacific Roman Catholics became more vocal and have spurred the Church to respond to Asian and Pacific congregational and ministerial concerns. In November 2001, the U.S. Catholic bishops issued the pastoral statement *Asian and Pacific Presence: Harmony in Faith*. This document recognizes the urgent need for effective programs that will inform, form, and transform Asian Pacific pastoral leaders for mission and ministry in a church and society. The Asian Pacific Pastoral Institute was established to carry out this vision.

Another significant development towards greater Asian American consciousness is the growing evangelical, charismatic, and Pentecostal presence within and independent of Catholicism and mainline Protestant denominations. Evangelical Asian Americans are predominantly Second Wave immigrants and their children. Unlike First Wave Asian Americans, evangelicals have exhibited "separatist" tendencies and relatively low levels of mainline Protestant denominational engagement. On the other

hand, those who have affiliated with evangelical or Pentecostal denominations are becoming a significant leadership presence. Evangelical congregations prefer to emulate what Donald Miller has called "new paradigm churches."³¹ Their leaders are more attuned to the consumer marketing orientation promoted by evangelical church growth specialists and are most willing to change the traditional models of clergy leadership. Consequently, the language of their leadership's "Asian American consciousness" often sounds more like a niche marketing strategy than a political advocacy grounded in the experience of racialization. In this regard, Second Wave leaders are more susceptible to shallow multi-culturalist or "color-blind" discourses that are popular today.

The impact of the large Second Wave immigrant and refugee population and their children upon Asian American Christianity is inestimable. Congregations and parishes with ties to older denominations have been pressured to adjust to the spirituality and ethos of the new immigrants. It remains to be seen whether Second Wave Asian American Christians will glean wisdom from the experiences of First Wave Asian Americans. Nevertheless,

³¹ Donald E. Miller, *Reinventing American Protestantism: Christianity in the New Millennium* (Berkeley: University of California, 1997).

Asian Americans are vibrant and growing presences among American Christianity today and will play important roles in an increasingly Global Christianity.

ASIAN AMERICAN IDENTIFICATION WITH CHRISTIANITY TODAY

Charting the religious demography of Asian Americans is a formidable task. Large national surveys that include questions about religion often have too few Asian Americans in the sample to make any reliable generalization. Moreover, the conventional survey questions are not adequate to measure the religious affiliation of Asian Americans. What we know about

Asian Christian immigrants and Asian converts in the United States are fueling the most dynamic changes in American Christianity today.

Asian American religions are mostly from fieldwork studies and a few surveys that were designed for other purposes but nonetheless included some religion questions. We need a focused survey of Asian American religions in order to generate any reliable statistics.

Some scholars of American religion suggest that as the number of Asian and other immigrants increase, the United States is undergoing a “de-Christianization” process or is becoming “a new multi-religious America” (Diana Eck 2001). It is true that many Asian immigrants have brought along their traditional, non-Christian religions. But according to the American Religious Identification Survey (NSRI) conducted in 1990, 63 percent of Asian Americans identified themselves as Christians. In 2001, this survey was updated as the American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS). Researchers noted that Asian Americans had become

more diverse religiously and that the proportion of the “Asian American population who are Christian has fallen from 63 percent to 43 percent, while those professing Asian religions (Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, etc) has risen from 15 percent to 28 percent.” It is helpful to note that NSRI and ARIS interviews were conducted only in English and Spanish. No Asian languages were utilized.³²

According to sociologist Stephen Warner, the more profound and wide-reaching change in American religion may be the “de-Europeanization” of American Christianity. While Latinos are contributing to this process significantly, Asian Christian immigrants and Asian converts in the United States are fueling the most dynamic changes in American Christianity today. With the exception of the Philippines and the Pacific basin islands, Christianity is a minority religion in Asia. But in the United States it is the largest and most active Asian American religious expression. Asian American Protestants and Catholics represent some of the most vibrant communities on the American Christian scene. Chinese and Korean Protestant congregations continue to grow and proliferate. Vietnamese and Filipinos are becoming significant presences in Catholic parishes. Evangelical campus ministries such as InterVarsity Christian Fellowship are experiencing a rapid influx of Asian American students. These communities are part of the emerging global Christianity that Lamin Sanneh and Philip Jenkins have alerted us to.³³ But they also, along with a growing African American and Latino communities, foreshadow a genuinely multi-cultural American Christianity.

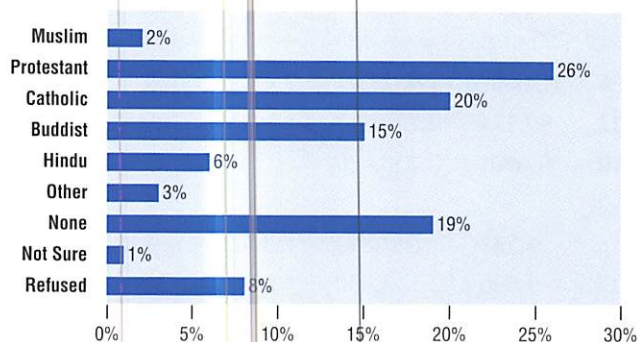
In this chapter we draw from a number of sources to provide estimates of the Asian American Christian population. The best available comparative data come from the Multi-Site Asian American Political Survey (MAAPS). This national survey was conducted in 2001-2002 in five metropolitan areas (Los Angeles, New York, Honolulu, San Francisco, and Chicago) and has a sample size of 1,218 Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, South Asian, and Vietnamese adults.³⁴

³² Barry A. Kosmin & Seymour P. Lachman, *One Nation Under God: Religion in Contemporary America* (New York: Harmony Books, 1993); for 2001 update see http://www.gc.cuny.edu/studies/aris_index.htm

³³ See Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002) and Lamin Sanneh, *Whose Religion is Christianity? The Gospel beyond the West* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003).

³⁴ Pei-te. Lien, *Pilot National Asian American Political Survey* (PNAAPS), 2000-2001. ICPSR version. Van Nuys, CA: Interviewing Service of America, Inc. [producer], 2001. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social [distributor], 2004. <http://webapp.icpsr.umich.edu/cocoon/ICPSR-STUDY/03832.xml> For details of the study and the initial analyses and interpretation, please consult a major publication associated with the dataset *The Politics of Asian Americans: Diversity and Community* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004, 320pgs, 47 tables, paperback \$24.95).

FIGURE 2:
RELIGIOUS PREFERENCES OF ASIAN AMERICANS



According to the survey, 46 percent of the respondents claimed to be Christian (Protestant and Catholic), a much higher percentage than any of the other religions (see Figure 2).

Table 6 reports religious identities of major Asian ethnic groups based on MAAPS. It confirms what we have learned in earlier empirical studies. We know that about 70 percent of Koreans attend Christian churches regularly. More Chinese claim a Christian identity than a Buddhist identity (about 25-30 percent vs. 20 percent) or any other religious identity (most are adult converts). More Japanese are Christians than Buddhists (about 45 percent vs. 25 percent). A third of Vietnamese are Christian (and about a half

are Buddhists). Conversion to Christianity is also an important phenomenon among the Koreans, the Vietnamese and other Southeast Asians.

According to *ARIS* and *MAAPS*, 43 to 46 percent of the Asian American population identify themselves as Christians. If accurate, this translates to more than 6 million Asian and Pacific Islander Christians. To begin the process of corroborating this information, we compiled Asian American demographic information from a sample of American denominations (Table 7 on p. 18).

Table 7 is obviously an incomplete picture of Asian American Christianity. Significant Asian American populations from the Southern Baptist Convention, the Seventh Day Adventist, and Episcopal Church are not included. Furthermore, many Asian American Christians are members of independent congregations or indigenous denominations that are not included in the ASARB data or the Yearbook of Churches. This table also does not include the Asian American Christians who are members of non-Asian American specific congregations.

Finally, our consultation team believes that the Asian American Roman Catholic membership based on *A National Parish Inventory Report* (1999) by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) and Catholic Poll is significantly undercounted. These surveys estimated that 2 percent of Catholics are Asian or Pacific Islanders.³⁶ Little data is available about

TABLE 6: PERCENTAGE OF RELIGIOUS IDENTITIES OF MAJOR ASIAN ETHNIC GROUPS

	CHINESE (308)	FILIPINO (266)	JAPANESE (198)	KOREAN (168)	VIETNAMESE (137)	S ASIAN (141)	TOTAL (1218)
Protestant	21.1	18.5	36.9	68.5	13.1	2.1	26.3
Catholic	2.9	68.0	6.1	11.3	19.7	0.7	20.4
Buddhist	18.8	1.1	23.7	4.8	48.9	0.7	15.1
Hindu		4.1	0.5			46.1	6.3
Muslim						17.0	2.0
Other	0.6	1.9	2.0	3.0	0.7	13.5	3.0
None	38.6	3.4	26.3	6.0	13.9	12.1	18.6
Not sure	1.0		0.5	0.6	2.9	0.7	0.8
Refused	17.9	3.0	4.0	6.0	0.7	7.1	7.6

³⁶ The report was based on a one-page questionnaire sent to all pastors, whose demographic perceptions are known to be vague especially for Asian and Pacific groups. Three questions gave some information about ethnicity:

- What is the approximate racial/ethnic composition of the parish? 3% were more than 40% Asian
- Does your parish identify with a particular ethnic/racial group? 1% Filipino, 1% Vietnamese, Hmong, Laotian, 1% Maronic, Arabic
- Language of masses other than English? 2.5% Vietnamese, 1% Filipino.

This data is highly ambiguous. The overall response rate of the survey itself was very poor—17% of parishes responded; this was even less for individual questions. Terminology also was inaccurate.

TABLE 7: ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN CHURCHES, MEMBERSHIP, AND PASTORAL LEADERSHIP FROM SELECT CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

BODY	YEAR REPORTING	# APA CHURCHES	BODY CHURCHES	APA MEMBERSHIP	TOTAL MEMBERSHIP	% MEMBERS	# APA PASTORS	TOTAL # OF PASTORS
American Baptist Churches	2002	120	5,836	10,000?	1,484,291	.6	110	4,325
Assemblies of God	2003	471	12,222	99,374	2,729,562	4	709	32,732
Christian & Missionary Alliance	1999	557	2,000	37,000?	250,000			
Christian Reformed Church, NA	2004	120	?					
Church of Nazarene	2002	129		6,721	552,893	1.1		
Church of South India, N.A.	2004	27	27	3,000	3,000	100	24	24
Episcopal Church	2002	66	7,305		2,320,221			6,057
Evangelical Covenant	2004	34	750	7,000	150,000	.5	80	1,869
Evangelical Free	2003	20						
Evangelical Lutheran Church of America	2003	75	5,738	22,898	5,118,675	0.45	95	11,799
Free Methodist Church N.A.	2003	21	880	2,100	72,611			1,603
International Pentecostal Holiness Church	2003	69	1,964	6,814	222,900	2.6		
Korean Presbyterian Church in America	2002			55,100	55,100	100	460	
Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod	2003	201	6,150	48,000	2,512,714		140	11,000
Malankara Archdiocese of the Syrian Orthodox Church in North America	2004	34						
Mar Thoma Syrian Church of India	2002	68	68	32,500	32,000	100	42	42
Presbyterian Church America	2004	200	1,248	32,000?	311,817	11.0	450	
Presbyterian Church USA	2002	346		64,565	2,441,928	3		8,725
Roman Catholic ³⁵	2001		19,484	1,200,000	63,352,200	2	1,279	46,709
Seventh Day Adventist	2004	148?	4,958		974,271			
Southern Baptist	2002	1,261	46,072		16,247,736			
United Church of Christ	2002			27,951	1,330,985	2		4,304
United Methodist Church	2002	1,270	35,469	81,022	7,786,811	1		26,236

Sources: Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies <http://www.asarb.org/statistics.htm>, 2004 *Yearbook of Churches in the United States and Canada*, and respective denominations.

³⁵ The 2003 Official Catholic Directory for the United States lists 29,715 diocesan priests; 14,772 religious priests; 14,106 permanent deacons; 5,568 religious brothers; and 74,698 sisters. There are 11 cardinals, 49 Archbishops, and 377 bishops in the United States. 66,407,105 or twenty three percent of US population (290,446,533) is Roman Catholic. Education is a highly valued ministry that involves 161,775 lay teachers; 1,596 priests; 33 scholastics; 1,021 brothers; and 7,389 sisters teaching. Major contexts of ministry include: 19,484 parishes; 1,069 pastoral centers; 824 diocesan and parish high schools; as well as 6,773 diocesan and parish elementary schools. Numbers are not given for Asian Catholic parishes. Asian Catholics have liturgical services and programs in their language and are culturally adapted, but these are more likely to take place in established parishes that share resources and facilities rather than in separate national parishes.

their participation in parish life or their experience as Catholics in the U.S. Church. Even the basic numbers of Asian and Pacific priests is lacking. We believe approximately 2.6 million Asian and Pacific Islander Roman Catholics are in the United States (Table 8):

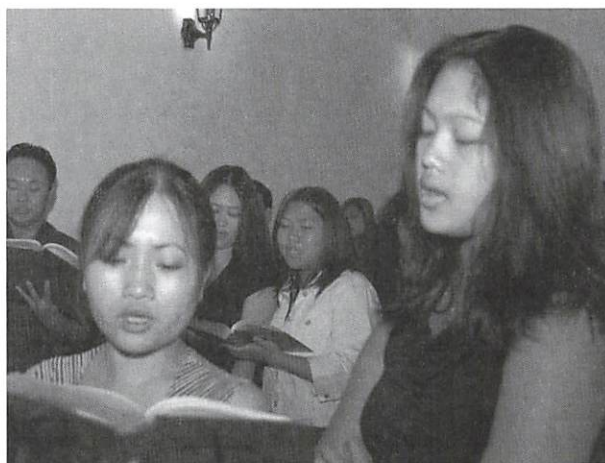
TABLE 8: ESTIMATE OF ASIAN AND PACIFIC CATHOLICS IN THE UNITED STATES³⁷

ETHNICITY	U.S. POPULATION	U.S. CATHOLICS
Chinese	2,432,585	300,000
Filipino	1,850,314	1,536,590
Indian	1,678,765	285,390
Vietnamese	1,122,528	325,000
Korean	1,076,872	74,887
Japanese	796,700	31,868
Samoan	91,029	20,290
Guamanian (Chamorro)	58,240	48,921
Tongan	27,713	4,000

The data gathered from ethnic Asian networks may be more precise because ethnic affiliation is often stronger than denominational participation, but they are also rather limited in scope. Ethnic network data is not collected or updated consistently, so it is difficult to develop a clear profile of congregations, membership, and pastoral leadership. Here are some examples: Dr. John Mizuki of the Japanese Evangelization Center (U. S. Center for World Mission) in Pasadena, California, lists 190 Japanese American congregations with an estimated membership of 32,573. The 2001 Korean Church Directory of America lists 3,402 Korean Protestant churches. About half of the Korean churches are Presbyterian, but substantial numbers are Methodist, Baptist, non-denominational, Catholic and Charismatic churches. The Internet website, KoreanCatholic.org, lists 154 Korean Catholic communities. The 2000-2001

Directory of Chinese Churches, Bible Study Groups, & Christian Organizations in North America lists 819 Chinese Protestant churches in the United States. Raymond Williams estimated 110,000 to 125,000 Asian Indian Christians in 1995. In James Chuck's 1996 qualitative regional study of Chinese Protestant Congregations in the San Francisco Bay Area, he reports 158 churches with 21,435 worshippers—approximately 6.8 percent of the Chinese population in the Bay Area.³⁸

Despite the difficulty of corroborating denominational and ethnic statistics with the *MAAPS* and *ARIS* surveys, even a cursory glance at existing data indicate that a significant number of Asian Americans identify themselves as Christians. Though the degree of Christian affiliation varies along different ethnic communities (e.g., there is a much higher percentage of Korean and Filipino Christians within their own populations than Chinese or Japanese), the perception that Asians in America are overwhelmingly unchurched is misleading. Asian American Christianity is a vibrant presence in the United States.



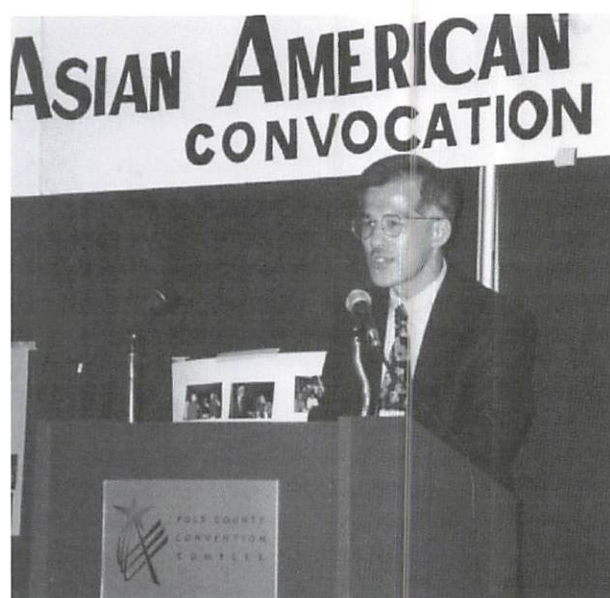
³⁷ These are based on the percentage of Catholics in their homelands in the *Annuario*, an official directory of the Vatican, applied to the population in the United States, with adjustments made for homelands such as China and Vietnam where greater numbers of Catholics immigrated. The estimate for Chinese includes Chinese from the mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan. For the six Asian groups and three Pacific Island groups this totals almost five and a half million Catholics. Based on an estimated 66.5 million Catholic population in the U.S., close to 8.5 % of Catholics are Asian or Pacific Islander. This estimate was prepared for the pastoral statement of the Catholic Bishops *Asian and Pacific Presence: Harmony in Faith*.

³⁸ Dr. John Mizuki, comp. *Japanese Churches in the United States: Statistics for 1997* (January – June) (Pasadena, CA.: Japanese Evangelization Center, 1998); Raymond Brady Williams, *Christian Pluralism in the United States: The Indian Immigrant Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 39. James Chuck, *An Exploratory Study of the Growth of Chinese Protestant Congregations from 1950 to mid-1996 in Five Bay Area Counties: San Francisco, San Mateo, Contra Costa, Alameda, and Santa Clara* (Berkeley: American Baptist Seminary of the West, 1996).

CHAPTER TWO: IMMIGRANT LEADERSHIP

Throughout the history of scholarly study of Asian American communities, little attention has been given to the immigrant generation. For instance, the immigrant Chinese and Japanese were neglected in the Oriental Survey conducted by Chicago sociologists in the early 1920s. This Protestant-sponsored survey was handicapped by lack of specialists who understood the languages of the immigrants. Thus, interviews were overwhelmingly conducted in English with second generation Chinese and Japanese.³⁹ Fortunately, sociologists and historians have recently started to give greater attention to Asian immigrant Christian communities.⁴⁰ Yet even in these studies, immigrant pastoral leadership has rarely received focused attention—possibly because of scholarly interest in communities rather than individual leaders. Many scholars and church leaders also believe that the immigrant generation is temporary, destined to vanish if the pace of immigration slows and as their acculturated descendents integrate into the American mainstream.

The lacuna of published scholarship about the first generation leadership is not due to a paucity of writings by immigrant leaders. Asian American Christian publications and internet websites are replete with newsletters, sermons, testimonies, theological essays, and practical suggestions. Yet, immigrant church leaders themselves rarely present reflections on their own experiences and perspectives in English. For instance, the expanded English edition of *Korean American Ministries* published by the Presbyterian Church USA devotes only a few pages to an examination of immigrant leadership concerns.⁴¹ While most immigrant leaders are bilingual and have the capacity to communicate in English, their attention is focused on ministry to their fellow immigrants and on relating to their “Americanized” parishioners.



Rev. Donald Ng, speaking at 1999 Asian American Baptist meeting.

Regardless of scholarly apathy towards Asian immigrant leaders or the unwillingness of the leaders themselves to engage in self-disclosure, continued ignorance of their experiences risks lost opportunities to learn about the variety of leadership styles found in global Christianity. The first generation retains strong transnational ties to the Church in Asia and can provide rich cultural resources for American Christians. This report therefore recommends that scholars equipped with Asian languages should be encouraged to explore and publish more research about the status of immigrant church leaders.

Given the lack of knowledge about the first generation church leadership, this chapter is a very tentative exploration of the current status of Asian immigrant pastoral leadership.

³⁹ Henry Yu, *Thinking Orientals: Migration, Contact, and Exoticism in Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁴⁰ Kenneth J. Guest, *God in Chinatown: Religion and Survival in New York's Evolving Immigrant Community* (New York: New York University Press, 2003); Jung Ha Kim, *Bridge-makers and Cross-bearers: Korean-American Women and the Church* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997); Raymond Brady Williams, *Christian Pluralism in the United States* op. cit.; Young Lee Hertig, *Cultural Tug of War: The Korean Immigrant Family and Church in Transition* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2001); Fenggang Yang, *Chinese Christians in America: Conversion, Assimilation, and Adhesive Identities* (University Park, Pa.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999); Sucheng Chan, *Survivors: Cambodian Refugees in The United States* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004); Sucheng Chan and Audrey U. Kim, *Not Just Victims: Conversations with Cambodian Community Leaders in the United States* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2003).

⁴¹ Sang Hyun Lee and John V. Moore, eds., *Korean American Ministry: Expanded English Edition* (Louisville, KY: General Assembly Council – Presbyterian Church USA). The unpublished studies of James Chuck, Samuel Ling, and Wing Ning Pang provide a glimpse into the world of immigrant Chinese pastors.

PREPARING TO LEAD IN THE U.S. CONTEXT

Priests or pastors who received their callings and pastoral formation in Asia are usually ill-equipped to lead Asian American congregations. Adjusting to the American cultural context, negotiating the diversities and inter-generational dynamics within individual congregations, engaging denominational bureaucracies, and navigating the intricate U.S. legal system as it applies to immigrants and religious organizations are major challenges. Nevertheless, with few exceptions, the demand for immigrant church leadership will continue in the future.

Immigrant church leaders have very few resources to prepare them for ministry in the United States. Ethnic networks provide informal orientation, but few main-line Protestant denominations offer any support. In part, this is due to the historic bifurcation of Protestant missions work into Foreign and Homeland agencies. Better coordination between these two agencies can help retain immigrant church leaders, particularly in denominations with congregational polities.

American seminaries also do not provide adequate preparation for immigrant church leaders to thrive in the U.S. or Asian American contexts. Pastors trained in Asian seminaries or bible schools appear better equipped for churches in Asia. Those who are trained in the United States may also be better prepared for Asia (if the seminary provides an intercultural program) or prepared to lead predominantly white congregations in North America (see chapter 5: "Leadership Formation").

Of all American Christian groups, the Roman Catholic Church has the most extensive program for preparing Asian and Pacific priests for ministerial leadership in US church and society.⁴² Below is a list of representative initiatives:

Cultural Orientation Program for International Priests (COPIP) is sponsored by the Center for Religion and Spirituality of Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, Calif. It is a series of three-day workshops intended to assist priests, whose native culture is not that of the United States, in becoming more effective

in ministry. It offers them a supportive and affirming space for intercultural dialogue, in which they learn more fully about U.S. church, culture, and society.

Institute of Languages and Culture (ILC) is sponsored by the Diocese of Brooklyn in New York. It offers courses in Spanish, Italian, Haitian Kreyol, English as a Second Language, as well as Accent Reduction to prepare priests for ministry in multicultural and multilingual congregations.

Maryknoll Cross-cultural Services (CCS) in Maryknoll, N.Y., offers consultation and facilitation services, acculturation workshops, and programs on cultural diversity and sensitivity.

International Priest Internship (IPI) assists priest-participants to translate their substantial pastoral skills into a new cultural context and adjust to new rhythms of a well lived pastoral life in the United States. Unlike past programs that provided only simple solutions to address complicated issues, IPI provides a year-long educational environment in which participants can respond to theological, cultural, and relational concerns in a safe and supportive environment.

The Congregation of Evangelization of Peoples has raised concern about the growing dependence of developed countries on priests from the mission countries due to clergy shortages such as in the U.S. Consequently a document was issued to all dioceses: *Instruction on the Sending Abroad and Sojourn of Diocesan Priests from Mission Territories*.

Asian deacons have served congregations effectively, especially when priests do not speak the language of the immigrant group. Their ministry has involved preaching, pastoral care of the sick, educational leadership, the sacramental celebration of baptism and marriage, and so forth. Other non-ordained men have also served as catechetical leaders, parish administrators, and liturgical ministers.

LEADING IN THE U.S. CONTEXT

Immigrant leaders with the most sharply defined ethnic or national identities will have the most difficult time adjusting to ministry in the U.S. context. These

⁴² According to the CARA report there are 1,116 Diocesan and 163 Religious priests from Asia. The Office for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees (PCMR), a department of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, challenges the accuracy of the CARA report. PCMR's information was taken directly from representatives of the various Asian Pacific communities who collaborate with PCMR as national consultants and liaisons. They report the following data in 2002 regarding Asian Pacific priests: 600 from Vietnam; 1 from Tonga; 1 from Samoa; 1 from the Philippines; 5 from Japan.

leaders will most likely insist on preserving Asian language and cultural practices among the children of immigrants. The immigrant pastors' ability to adjust to the U.S. context depends on a number of factors:

THE INFLUENCE OF THE ASIAN CONTEXTS

For immigrant pastors, the socio-political and historical situation in Asia often determines their sense of identity and their degree of participation in American Christianity. South Korean pastors appear to bring a clearly defined ethnic identity and expectations of American denominations. Yet because Korean Christians do not associate American missionaries with colonialism in Korea, their perceptions of American Christianity tend to be more positive. Many Chinese pastors, on the other hand, are relatively ambivalent about their identities. This is due to a strong antipathy towards the Communist regime in China and awareness that the Chinese Diaspora is composed of diverse Chinese cultural identities. Southeast Asian refugee leaders often have a sense of identity loss due to devastating wars and a traumatic experience of relocation. According to Ken Kong, Cambodian American Christians "still suffer from depression as a community. We struggle with post-traumatic stress disorder. We struggle with different mental issues, and that prevents us from doing ministry healthy, healthy ministry."⁴³ The Roman Catholic presence and experience of American colonialism in the Philippines also shape the perspectives of many Filipino American leaders. In the case of South Indian Christians, the reality of religious pluralism in their homelands may influence their sense of identity. Each trans-Pacific setting calls for specific attention in order to better understand the immigrant pastor's adjustment to the U.S.

THE IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION IN THE PASTOR'S EXPERIENCE IN ASIA

In Post-colonial Asia, nationalism appears to be waning or changing (especially in large urban centers). While globalization can be viewed, in part, as the exporting of Asian cultures and goods into the West,

it can also be viewed as the Americanization of urban, postmodern Asian culture. Many younger leaders from Asia with access to the media and education have been exposed to American culture. Asian church leaders have had diverse responses to globalization, yielding increasingly sophisticated styles of ministerial leadership influenced by American evangelicalism. A number of writers have bemoaned the uncritical identification of the rapidly growing evangelical and Pentecostal movements in Asia with American culture. "A homogenization of the gospel message has occurred in certain places [in India]" notes mission historian Robert Eric Frykenberg:

"...local cultures are being overwhelmed and local variations obliterated for the sake of uniformity. Indian Christian leaders, missionaries, patrons, and scholars are being co-opted by enterprising 'off-shore' and/or 'overseas' agencies to return to India and 'parrot-back' the language, style, and vocabulary of 'Gospel Globalization'... To the degree that globalizing tendencies are being imported from abroad and set up by Christians in India, Indian Christians are finding that their own perspectives and pronouncements are viewed as alien and hostile by the dominant elites in India."⁴⁴

It remains to be seen how globalization contributes to the adaptation of Asian immigrant pastors to the U.S. context.

LEADERSHIP STYLES AND CONGREGATIONAL EXPECTATIONS

As in many other immigrant organizations, Asian immigrant church leadership is often plagued with power struggles. Conflicts persist among leaders and between the clergy and laity. Among first-generation Korean parents and church leaders, for instance, the model of empowerment demonstrated by Jesus seems to be a foreign concept. Hierarchical family and church structures condone coercive expressions of power.⁴⁵ Because most Korean immigrant church structures are leader-centered, the pastors often resem-

⁴³ Ken Kong interview by Alina Hsiao (Saturday, September 6, 2003).

⁴⁴ "Gospel, Globalization, and Hindutva: The Politics of 'Conversion' in India," in *Christianity Reborn: The Global Expansion of Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century*, edited by Donald M. Lewis (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004): 129-130. Similar concerns are raised by Allan K. Davidson in the same volume: "'The Pacific is No Longer a Mission Field?' Conversion in the South Pacific in the Twentieth Century" (pp. 133-153).

⁴⁵ Young Lee Hertig, "The Role of Power in the Korean Immigrant Family and Church" (PhD Dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1991): 320-321.

ble Shamans. The normally male pastor exercises power by claiming his role as mediator for God and by conducting ceremonies of blessings for wealthy businesses. Thus, prosperity and success are sanctified as signs of God's blessing.⁴⁶ Furthermore, loyalty is a strong trait that is deeply embedded in Asian culture. When superiors demand blind loyalty of subordinates, the subordinates are expected to obey. In other words, what matters is an unchanging commitment to a powerful leader. The leadership style is, therefore, based on power that flows downward from God to the pastor, and from the pastor to the loyal laity. Although the second generation reacts against such demand for loyalty, they are not exempted from such values because their own family system reflects similar values as the church. Under such a leadership style, dissenters are marginalized by being labeled "unspiritual." This old paternalistic leadership style is strongly reinforced when an immigrant community remains isolated from society at large. As the older immigrant leaders approach retirement age, many seem to cling tightly to a power base that they have built all their lives. Thus, founding pastors tend to have a sense of ownership of the church to which they have devoted their lives.

The danger of dictatorship in the church stems not only from the leader's own dark side, but often also from the laity's desire for a charismatic leader from whom they tend to draw power vicariously.⁴⁷ Although congregations tend to react negatively to a strong authoritarian leadership style, they are deeply conditioned by this leadership style. Ironically, when an alternative style is presented, laity often do not accept it as legitimate. Authoritarian leadership is a double-edged sword that affects both leader and the laity and creates much of the inter-generational tensions that many Asian immigrant congregations experience.⁴⁸ Based on anecdotal evidence, however, it appears that many immigrant pastors are undergoing a generational shift from an authoritarian leadership style rooted in Asian popular religiosity and separatist evangelicalism towards one that is consensual and open to public engagement.

In addition to issues surrounding leadership style, many immigrant pastors also struggle to discuss sustainable

wages. Stories of pioneer Korean, Japanese, and Chinese immigrant pastors consistently describe these church planters as faithful and frugal. American missionaries were the primary models of leadership for these pioneers. Thus, piety, sacrificial devotion, and independent authority (i.e., independent of the congregation) were more highly valued. But these traits can also be attributed to Confucian, Buddhist or Hindu religious influences. Thus, it has been observed that many Chinese congregations view their pastor very much like a Christian version of the Buddhist monk. The monk was to live in voluntary poverty and beg for his livelihood. These attributes have been transferred to many immigrant Chinese congregations and thus, create difficulties in pastoral sustainability and longevity.

While it is too early to tell, it appears that Asian immigrant pastors who develop "visionary and consensus builder" rather than the "surrogate Christian" styles of leadership will do well in North America. The increasing educational and financial status of the immigrant members of many Asian American congregations will likely demand greater professionalism among their pastoral staff. However, it is also too early to tell whether the wages of immigrant pastors will be commensurate with this expectation. Furthermore, impoverished Asian immigrant or refugee congregations will continue to struggle to support their pastoral leaders and service to their communities without additional assistance.⁴⁹

GENERATIONAL TRANSITIONS

One concern raised by immigrant leadership has been the question of generational transition. In contexts where immigration continues to fuel congregational growth, the "silent exodus" phenomenon (when second generation members choose to leave immigrant congregations) has been a cause for concern. In settings where immigration has slowed or stopped, this phenomenon has become alarming. Some groups, such as the Christian Missionary Alliance's bi-cultural program and the Taiwanese churches in Southern California have already taken steps to address this concern.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 129-130.

⁴⁷ Ibid. 129-133.

⁴⁸ Ibid. 133-135.

⁴⁹ Helene Slessarev-Jamir, *A Place of Refuge and Sustenance: How Faith Institutions Strengthen the Families of Poor Asian Immigrants* (Baltimore: Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2003).

CHAPTER THREE: THE SECOND GENERATION AND BEYOND⁵⁰

ISSUES IN THE PEW

GENERATIONAL TENSIONS

The majority of Asian Americans are post-1965 immigrants, so for nearly two decades, churches did not face the challenge of providing religious services to an English speaking population. However, as the second generation entered young adulthood, they began to express discontent over the immigrant churches, which they felt catered to the needs of their parent's generation. During this period, tensions and schisms between the first and second generation began to multiply. The most acute tensions revolved around two issues. First, younger pastors began to view the immigrant churches as dysfunctional and hypocritical religious institutions that were modeling a negative expression of Christian spirituality for the second generation. Second, continual clashes occurred between the generations over issues involving cultural differences in the styles and philosophies of church leadership as well as control.

In response to both the generational rumblings and reports of an increasing church drop-out rate among the American-born generation, many immigrant churches were pressured to make some accommodation to the demands and needs of the second generation. The immigrant churches began to implement a variety of solutions ranging from purchasing simultaneous translation equipment, to hiring English-speaking ministers, to replacing Sunday school classes with language classes so that their children could learn to participate in the main worship service for the first generation. However, the second generation was largely unsatisfied with what they considered band-aid concessions. Subsequently, many have started their own English-speaking congregations as Pan-Asian or multiethnic (Jeung 2003).

HYBRID SPIRITUALITIES

In their quest to invent an independent second generation spirituality, the leaders of these new ministries aim to adopt what they perceive to be essential beliefs, symbols, and practices from a variety of cultural and spiritual resources and re-anchor them in their newly formed

churches. Within these ministries, the second generation hopes to develop their own unique hybrid spirituality by appropriating and fusing together elements of Confucianism, immigrant Protestantism, and various expressions of American Evangelicalism (Yang 1999).

RELATIONSHIP WITH AMERICAN EVANGELICALISM

Several second generation churches are highly influenced by the seeker sensitive models popularized by rapidly growing evangelical mega-churches such as Willow Creek Community Church in Illinois and Saddleback Community Church in Southern California. Younger Asian Americans, who attend Christian campus fellowships that are primarily evangelical, tend to congregate at theologically similar congregations (Busto 1999). One of the central tenets of their highly evangelistic, seeker sensitive model is that churches should create an environment within their worship services that are attractive, non-threatening, and non-alienating for non-Christians.

Although worship styles and administrative structures may resemble mainstream, seeker sensitive, or "new paradigm churches," second generation churches are not mirror copies of mainstream churches. In fashioning their own unique expressions of spirituality, the younger ministers feel that several elements of immigrant spirituality need to be preserved and practiced within their newly formed churches. Most importantly, many believe that immigrants better understand and practice the key Biblical concept of community because they come from a Confucian society that stresses the importance of the collective over the individual. Rejecting the American cultural paradigm of individualism and the ways that it has shaped American Christianity, second generation churches aim to embrace the centrality of community.

TRENDS IN ASIAN AMERICAN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

These new second generation churches attempt to reclaim what the leaders view as "biblical community." They argue that within American individualism, the self become the central, if not only, reality. The leadership realize that second generation

⁵⁰ We focus on the Protestant perspective here because there is not yet enough research regarding second generation Catholic Asian Americans.

Asian Americans are being increasingly influenced by American individualism. Commitment to churches and to ministries is determined largely through a self-centered, cost/benefit calculation. Recognizing this trend toward individualism, many pastors are determined to break down self-centered thinking and living among the second generation and to replace it with a God-centered worldview that expresses itself in a greater level of concern and commitment to the community of believers.

Second generation leaders reject sharp distinctions between clergy and laity and have made conscious efforts to blur these lines. Embracing the notion of the priesthood of all believers, lay members at these new churches are encouraged to serve the church body in practical ways by exercising their spiritual gifts. The churches place a high priority on members discovering, developing, and deploying their spiritual gifts, with many churches offering special classes or seminars on the topic. Emphatically, second generation ministers have communicated through teaching and by example, that the distinction between clergy and laity is man made and needs to be replaced by the reality that all Christians are called to be ministers.

Second generation pastors are relational and shy away from hierarchical notions of leadership and the rigid separation of clergy and laity. In immigrant churches, respect and honor are often given automatically to the senior pastor by virtue of the title. However, for the second generation, titles do not necessarily ensure respect. Rather, pastors have to earn respect by spending time with church members and proving that they genuinely care. (Chai 1998).

Second generation ministries also emphasize combating the materialism of second generation Asian Americans, who are increasingly well educated and upwardly mobile. The younger ministers are quick to reject certain aspects of mainstream evangelical Christianity, in particular the influence of materialism and comfort, which they believe are inconsistent with their understandings of true Biblical Christianity. Many immigrant parents have experienced downward mobility in the United States and have had to defer their hopes and dreams for upward mobility to their children (Lie 1995). This reality has fostered a high level of pressure upon the second generation to attend elite universities, find high paying jobs, and prove to their immigrant



parents that their sacrifices have paid off. Second generation churches are making an intentional attempt to encourage their members to not limit themselves to traditional money making career options.

Involvement of Asian American churches in the broader community depends on whether the church is mainline Protestant or evangelical. Mainline Protestant congregations tend to work on Asian American political or social issues, such as immigrant rights. In contrast, evangelical churches tend towards mission work or charity efforts in non-Asian contexts. A new trend towards Asian American-led, multi-ethnic, evangelical congregations includes an emphasis on neighborhood outreach, especially to low-income areas. In these congregations, ministers generally recognize and affirm the ethnic identities of all their members rather than believing that all their members are the same.

PROMISING PRACTICES IN THE PULPIT

DISCERNING GOD'S CALL: ENTERING SEMINARY

The numerous job vacancies for English-speaking ministers at Asian American churches indicate a great need for more Asian American seminarians. What might encourage more persons to consider seminary? A look at how Asian American ministers have discerned God's call suggests that active encouragement by others is needed.

While some had dramatic, discernible calls from God to enter full-time ministry, most second generation, Asian American pastors became clearer about their vocational plans upon going to seminary, enjoying class work, and following God through “open doors” of opportunity. Given their passion to know and serve God, they considered their unique skills, personality traits, and training to determine if they were fit for ministry. Most significantly, most of these pastors feel called to the Asian American church because of their particular backgrounds and experiences with these communities.

Many attended seminary at the urging of their own ministers, who recognized their leadership potential and interest in church work. One explained, “It’s strange where those formative years come back. I remember a pastor in high school telling me I should think about

seminary. I must have been in my mid-20s when I attended a Presbyterian youth conference for young adults and had an opportunity to do a lot of thinking about my call.” Another added, “My pastor was trying to expose me to different things around the church. She was the

one who suggested that I might be interested in auditing some courses at seminary. Because we’d talk, I’d have all these questions all the time and she thought this would be an interesting thing for me to experience.”

For the six female ministers in this study, seminary was especially pivotal in their vocational paths. One noted, “I wanted to explore church work as a career, and I went to seminary just to get the tools I needed to be a better minister. I didn’t really have an idea that I would go on to vocational ministry, but that became an option.” Another explained, “I didn’t really feel God’s call to me as a minister until I was halfway through seminary. I wanted to go to seminary mostly to become better equipped as a Sunday School teacher.” After interning as pastoral associates, they later entered full-time vocational ministry.

Most of these pastors found seminary to be satisfactory for their theological training. More significantly, they were exposed to positive role models and to new oppor-

tunities for ministry.⁵¹ Because these ministers entered seminary in their twenties, having older mentors demonstrated that fruitful ministry in the Asian American church was possible. Another female pastor commented,

In the last few years it has struck me how much having role models makes a difference. There was that conference and Greer Anne Ng, who’s a professor up in Canada, was there. She was probably the first Asian woman that I have seen who’s a theological professor. And she was older! I was stunned, really stunned to see her. Not that I really wanted to teach at the seminary level, but to see her really made this other connection that was surprising to me.

Because of the cultural conflicts and authoritarian parenting that American-born generations may have experienced, they generally have negative impressions of authority figures. Positive role models of leaders, therefore, are critical to encourage the younger generation to enter the ministry. Another pastor felt drawn to the nurturance he received from his pastors:

I gravitated towards what I perceived to be strong yet nurturing leaders, who to me really spoke of a sense of order and a sense of healthy, empowering authority. And because of that I think I’ve always had a predisposition to go into ministry just because there was very positive modeling for me.

Another major route to ministry was the desire to do missions work. At missions conferences such as the Urbana Conference, sponsored by InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, or in short-term missions experiences, many of these pastors found joy in evangelizing and teaching others about God. For example, this minister responded when encouraged by missionaries from the field: “I dedicated my life to God, and within a year, I received a very definitive calling to enter full-time ministry in a missions conference.” Four other ministers similarly sensed a call from God to do work in cross-cultural contexts and to do missions. After stints abroad, they settled in the United States as pastors with a continued desire to “reach the unreached.”

Ministers who wanted to do missions recognized that they were best equipped to reach out to other Asians in the United States. One pastor noted that she was one of the few seminarians who share the ethnic identity and experiences of other Asian Americans:

⁵¹ On the other hand, none of the ministers mentioned seminary as critical to their spiritual formation.

“There are times I really think, ‘Gosh, I really am uniquely qualified.’ I’m second generation, grew up speaking Chinese at home, and I really relate to a lot of the folks in the English service.” Another related, “I did feel called to work in the Asian community. I wasn’t real specific about which Asian community, but I thought, given my experience and my knowledge at that time, I was most comfortable in a Chinese American community. I felt called to it because I didn’t see a lot of Chinese American church leaders.”

Overall, these ministers felt their experiences as Asian Americans made them culturally sensitive to generational, ethnic, and racial issues that their communities faced. Asian Americans often face generation gaps with parents because of language barriers and differences in social expectations. At the same time, Asian Americans may feel different from the broader society because of their communication patterns and cultural practices. Finally, racial stereotypes and discrimination may lead to internalized self-hatred. Both evangelical and mainline ministers acknowledged these factors make Asian American a distinct group with particular ministry needs.

The last general category by which Asian American ministers discerned their vocational calling was through camp experiences and dramatic conversions or visions. One pastor promised to become a minister if God healed him, and he did recover from his life-threatening illness. Other pastors told of profound experiences or visions that made them thirst for more of the Spirit. Their emotional responses, though, became tempered through time and further training.

In summary, no matter how these ministers first heard God’s call, they continued to pursue vocational ministry as a result of their educational training, positive role models, and an understanding that their ethnic identity was an asset to building Asian American congregations.

ENTERING FULL-TIME MINISTRY AND JOB MOBILITY

During and immediately after seminary, these ministers found work in four main occupations. Most joined church staffs as youth ministers of the English ministry. Another large group worked as campus ministers for the burgeoning numbers of Asian American fellowships on university campuses. Those who

worked in larger congregations served as music or worship ministers, and a few became interim ministers for churches looking for head pastors.

By far, most seminary graduates obtained their first positions as youth ministers of English-speaking ministries in ethnic churches. With the great demand for youth ministers, seminary graduates had little difficulty finding such jobs. Because these graduates were still in their twenties, they could connect with the younger generation. However, these positions often had no career mobility, and ministers complained of being “relegated to a junior position” in the church. Youth ministries and even the English-speaking ministries in ethnic churches lacked autonomy, financial resources, and support of the church boards. As a result, young pastors chafed for more opportunities to grow their congregations.

Those who served as campus ministers had more opportunity to change worship styles, develop new leadership, and explore innovative outreach methods. They also recognized the viability of pan-Asian ministries, in which Asians of different ethnicities could come together in fellowship. Pan-Asian ministries provide congregations with a larger market from which to draw, and this new identity has less cultural baggage for some Asian Americans. However, work as a parachurch minister requires much fundraising and offers little salary, so it is not a long-term viable occupation.

Some seminary graduates found work as worship ministers or interim ministers, but these positions also offered little job mobility. Because of their ministry options are often blocked in these positions, starting new congregations is an attractive option for Asian American ministers who have been out of seminary for a few years. While ethnic congregations are more limited by language and traditions, new pan-Asian or multiethnic churches can organize around new visions for community, worship, and ministry. Half of the ministers in Jeung’s study pastored at new churches or new English-speaking congregations that were given autonomy.

APPLYING ONE’S CALLING: SUSTAINABILITY IN THE PULPIT

In one study of 50 Asian American ministers over a period of eight years, 12 percent changed pastorates, 6 percent entered non-church ministries, and 10 percent

left the ministry. Significantly, 50 percent of the female ministers left pastoral ministry (Jeung 2003). What factors kept these pastors in the ministry? Few had head pastors that mentored them in how to do English-speaking ministry, and none of their congregations have seen enormous numerical growth. Despite these obstacles, this sample of ministers continued to pastor because of three distinct practices.

First, Asian American ministers have adopted democratic and participatory leadership styles that allow them to spread their workload. Every new Asian American congregation in this sample hosted small groups, with lay leaders who teach Bible studies, offer support and prayer, and organize activities. The worship teams of the congregations also run fairly autonomously, freeing ministers to focus on preaching and other responsibilities. In contrast, ministers of immigrant, ethnic congregations bear much more of the load in discipling, worship leading and preaching.

Second, Asian American ministers use conferences and training to keep them updated on church practices. Most ministers in this study attended or knew of seminars hosted by Willow Creek and Saddleback churches, two of the largest mega-churches in the United States. Although immigrant congregations may be more linguistically isolated from other American churches, these second generation congregations participate in other evangelical movements such as Billy Graham crusades, the Promise Keepers movement, and the Vineyard renewal movement. Those in the mainline often participated in denominational caucuses for Asian Americans. Finally, most ministers identified other pastors with whom they meet for prayer and accountability. Subsequently, these ministers are kept abreast of local, denominational, and Asian American developments in ministry.

Third, Asian American ministers seem to be sustained by fresh visions of what their congregations could be. Whether these visions are for evolving ministries, changes in church structure, or new church plants, these pastors are forward-looking and strategic. Because most of their congregations consist of Baby Boomers or younger, their churches remain active and busy with children's ministries, parenting and couples groups, and missions projects. New church plants seem less beset with difficult conflicts around resources or staffing. However, with a more upwardly mobile and professional congregation, members are more likely to move and shop for churches that meet their needs. As a result, congregations and their pastors must identify programs, worship styles and preaching that continually meet the needs of their market.

In conclusion, this study reveals some surprising trends about Asian American ministers. These ministers have a strong sense of their ethnic and racial identity that helped them identify their calling and ministry. As they entered fulltime ministry, they easily find work, but usually their entry-level positions pay little and remain short-term. Once these ministers have developed their own congregations, however, they are freed to exercise their entrepreneurial and leadership gifts. On the whole, their congregations are healthier and more stable than immigrant ones, with fewer conflicts that result in church splits. In addition, these pastors have much more balanced and healthy workloads by sharing church authority, meeting with other ministers, and staying up-to-date with the field. Unfortunately, no studies have examined the compensation and benefits for Asian American ministers, so ascertaining the effect of salary on longevity of Asian Americans in ministry is difficult.

CHAPTER FOUR: ASIAN AMERICAN WOMEN IN MINISTRY

A PROFILE OF ASIAN AMERICAN WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

While no systemic study has been conducted specifically about Asian American clergywomen, three sets of data on clergywomen in the United States in general are instructive. The U.S. Census has broad information about women who have been ordained in Protestant churches in the United States. The 1960 Census listed 2,727 clergywomen, which was about 2.3 percent of all clergy. By 1970 that percentage had increased to 2.9 percent. In 1980 clergywomen were 5.8 percent of all clergy, while female lawyers and judges increased from 4.9 percent to 14 percent, and female physicians and surgeons from 9.7 percent to 13.4 percent. By 2000 the percentage of female clergy increased to 13.8 percent (50,922 clergywomen). The same year, about 29.7 percent of all lawyers and judges were female, and 27.9 percent of all medical doctors were female.⁵²

Another data set and analysis based on the National Council of Churches between 1977 and 1986 illustrate that despite the fact that approximately 80 Protestant denominations ordained women by that time, clergywomen were still clustered in a few denominations. The two denominations with the greatest numbers of female clergy are the Assemblies of God with 3,718 female clergy, and the Salvation Army with 3,220.⁵³ And interestingly, these two denominations were reported to have the lowest rate of Asian American memberships the time. Among the "mainline" Protestant denominations, only three had more than a thousand female clergy: the United Methodist Church (1,891), the Presbyterian Church, USA (1,519), and

the United Church of Christ (1,460). Based on the same data set, Jacquet (1988) also provides an interesting finding that only 20 percent of female clergy in 1988 are serving in the traditional parish ministry as "senior pastor," whether alone or with other clergy partner(s).⁵⁵

Among more recent studies of clergywomen, especially in two protestant denominations—the United Methodist and the Lutheran—Charlton (1994) found that approximately half of the women had left ministry over a 15-year period.⁵⁶ This 50 percent dropout rate is rather high and is certainly much higher than the dropout rate for male clergy (a little under 30 percent) in the same denominations. Clergywomen appear to be also leaving the ministry at a faster rate and at a younger age than men. Suggestive of reasons for the 50 percent dropout rate is Charlton's finding that while only a few clergywomen in her study sample aspired to be feminists while in seminary training, almost all wanted to join the feminist ranks after 15 years in the parish, "although they felt that their role as a minister would not permit it."⁵⁷ The study also cites the lack of support (from local community and denomination) and resistance from the parish as other important reasons for the high dropout rate for U.S. clergywomen.

While the exact number of Asian American clergywomen in mainline Protestant denominations is hard to come by, the United Methodist Church listed 69 Asian American clergywomen in its clergy directory in 2001, and the Presbyterian Church USA listed 19 in its directory. Among 69 Asian American clergywomen, more than 50 percent (42) are Korean American clergywomen who mostly serve cross-cultural and cross-racial appointments. For more personal portrayals of Asian American women's leadership roles in various Christian institutions—including Protestant mainline denominations,

⁵² This 2.9 percent clergywomen is compared to 4.9 percent female lawyers and judges, and 9.7 percent female physicians and surgeons in 1970. The comparison among these three occupational women is discussed in Ronald L. Johnston's *Religion in Society*, 7th edition (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2004), pp.239-242.

⁵³ These data are from U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistic Abstract of the United States: 1963*, 84th edition, 1963, p. 232; 103th edition, 1981, p. 403; 121th edition, 2001, p. 380.

⁵⁴ Constant H. Jacquet, Jr., *Women Ministers in 1986 and 1977: A Ten Year View* (N.Y.: National Council of Churches, 1988), p. 4.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Joy Charlton, "Dropping Out/Staying In: Revisiting Women Ministers in Mid-Career," a paper presented at the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, November 5, 1994; referred by the Division of the Ordained Ministry, UMC.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

seminaries, universities, and non-profit organizations—Brock and Kim selected 15 such leaders in 2002.⁵⁸ The women were across lines of generation (first, 1.5, second, and fourth generations), ethnicity (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Thai, and India), denomination (Disciples, Methodist, non-denominational, Presbyterian, and the United Church of Canada) and field of training/expertise (theology, Biblical studies, social sciences, ethics, and religious education) coalescing together to build bridges and to serve their own communities.

Regarding women's leadership in the Roman Catholic Church, women were allowed to enroll in schools of theology to prepare for ministry after the Second Vatican Council (concluded in 1965). Within two decades, approximately one-fourth of students

enrolled in Catholic theological school were women.⁵⁹ These theologically trained Catholic women are allowed to serve as parish administrators, or pastoral associates. Although these positions are not ordained, they reflect

the Catholic Church's endeavors to provide ministry to parishes without a priest because of a shortage of

young men aspiring to the priesthood. Indeed, these lay leadership positions are essential to the well-being and sustenance of the Catholic Church. And nearly half (46.5 percent) of professional staff positions in Catholic dioceses are held by women.⁶⁰

TRAINING FOR WOMEN

From 1972 to 1987, enrollment of women in Protestant seminaries in the U.S. and Canada increased 356 percent, while enrolled for men increased only 36 percent.⁶¹ At Roman Catholic theological schools, Wallace reports that enrollment of women was approximately 25 percent in 1988 and almost 30 percent by 2000.⁶²

With respect to assessing Asian American women's experiences of training for ministry, two related discussions can be compared: their *educational attainment levels* and the *quality of culturally competent ministerial training*. A nation-wide study of the status of racial-ethnic minority clergywomen in the United Methodist Church by Kim and Ross (2003), indicates that Asian American and Hispanic American clergywomen have the highest educational attainment among all racial-ethnic groups. Some 86.4 percent of Asian American clergywomen and 84.6 percent of Hispanic American clergywomen who participated in the study have graduate and/or professional degrees.⁶⁶ In spite of the high rate of educational attainment by

Asian American and Hispanic American clergywomen have the highest educational attainment among all racial-ethnic groups.

⁵⁸ Rita N. Brock and Nami Kim, "Asian American Christian Women's Leadership," a paper presented at the annual conference of American Academy of Religion, Toronto, Canada, 2002.

⁵⁹ Rita J. Simon, et al, "Rabbis and Ministers: Women and the Book and the Cross," *Sociology of Religion*, 54, no. 1 (Spring 1993); 115.

⁶⁰ "Women are advancing in Catholic Church jobs, *The Ann Arbor News*, July 10, 1999, p. A10 from the Associated News Press; cited in Johnstone, p. 243.

⁶¹ The Association of Theological Schools began to identify the gender of seminarians in 1972.

⁶² Ruth Wallace, "The Social Construction of a New leadership Role: Catholic Women Pastors," *Sociology of Religion* 54, no. 1 (Spring 1993).

⁶³ Meinzer, C., and Merrill, N. *Fact Book on Theological Education, 2002-2003* (Pittsburgh, PA: Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, 2003).

⁶⁴ Brock, Rita N., Jung Ha Kim, Kwok Pui-lan, Nantawan B. Lewis, Greer A. W. Ng, Seung Ai Yang, and Gale A. Yee, *Developing Teaching Materials and Instructional Strategies for Teaching Asian and Asian North American/Canadian Women's Theologies in North America* (1999).

⁶⁵ Ng, G. A. W., "Toward wholesome nurture: Challenges in the religious education of Asian North American female Christians," *Religious Education*, 91(2), 238-254, 1996; and Tisdell, E. J., *Creating Inclusive Adult Learning Environments: Insights from Multicultural Education and Feminist Pedagogy*, (Columbus, OH: Eric Clearinghouse on Adult Career and Vocational Education, 1995).

⁶⁶ Jung Ha Kim and Rosetta R. Ross, *The Status of Racial-ethnic Clergywomen in the United Methodist Church* (Nashville, TN: the Board of Ordained Ministry, 2003).

Asian American clergywomen, many reported that they experience cognitive dissonance between their seminary training and actual ministry. In general, while their seminary training helped Asian American clergywomen plan and structure ministry, it lacked training for “more day-to-day of what ministry really is about” and “relationship with people in a congregational or beyond the congregational kinds of settings.” Some Korean American clergywomen also reported that they had to “unlearn” what they learned from seminary and “re-learn everything anew” from their own congregation.⁶⁷ In short, Kim and Ross’s study points to the need to systematically assess the content, quality, and applicability of seminary education that clergywomen of color undergo to the ministries in which they find themselves.

SUPPORT NETWORKS

It is well-documented that women make up a majority of Asian American Christian faith communities (both Protestants and Catholics).⁶⁸ As major contributors and sustainers of their own (ethnic and/or pan-Asian) church, women play important roles teaching Sunday school classes, preparing and serving ethnic foods, hosting social and holiday events, and running support networks both within and without their own church. In many cases such support networks are organized into gender-segregated groups and programs such as Women’s Bible study, Women’s prayer meetings, Churchwomen’s Bazaar, and International Women’s Prayer day (network). Based on women’s theological and political stances on various issues, women also form support network across denominational and racial boundaries. For example, Protestant evangelical Women’s Aglow Fellowship has reached out to Asian American women, and their monthly newsletter is translated into several Asian languages.⁶⁹ And women

of color (across racial boundaries) who are members of the United Methodist Church (across clergy and laity boundaries) and pursuing the academic Ph.D. degree have been coming together biannually for fellowship, mentorship, and scholarship support since 1990 as the Women of Color Scholars. There are other nation-wide support networks for Asian American Christian women such as PANAAWTM (Pacific Asian North American and Asian Women in Theology and Ministry) with regionally organized chapters. And Korean American women who went through seminary-training across denominational lines came together to form KAWDT (Korean American Women Doing Theology) in 1987, and also founded RICE (Resource Information Center for Empowerment) in 1995.

COMPENSATION, ADVANCEMENT, AND CROSS RACIAL APPOINTMENTS

Issues related to cross-cultural/cross-racial appointments are deeply gendered, especially from the perspectives of Asian and Asian Pacific Islander North American clergywomen. That is, since Asian American Protestant churches are ministered primary by their own racial-ethnic clergymen, and since their co-ethnic churches are less likely to accept women’s clerical authority, Asian American clergywomen are more likely to serve non-Asian American churches. In the context of the United Methodist Church, for example, 80.5 percent (i.e., 33 out of 41) of Asian American clergywomen served cross-cultural/cross-racial ministry in 2002.⁷⁰ Some of the common challenges that Asian American clergywomen face in cross-cultural/cross-racial appointments are: Parish resistance, short-term ministry, language and cultural barriers, different leadership styles, lack of support

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Tony Carnes and Fenggang Yang, *Asian American Religions: The Making and Remaking of Borders and Boundaries* (N.Y.: New York University Press, 2004); Won Moo Hurh and Kwang Chung Kim, “Religious Participation of Korean Immigrants in the United States,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 29(1990):19-34; Ai Ra Kim, *Women Struggling for A New Life*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996; Jung Ha Kim, *The Bridge-makers and Cross-bearers: The Church and the Korean American women*, New York; London: Oxford University Press, 1997; Pyong Gap Min and Jung Ha Kim, ed., *Religions in Asian America*, Alta Mira Press, 2002; and Stephen Warner and Judith Wittner, *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration*, Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1998.

⁶⁹ Marie Griffith’s study (1997) of the nation-wide organization, Algow Fellowship, documents how and why Protestant Evangelical women are coming together to voice and lead their own Christian faith journeys in their own terms. Marie Griffith, *God’s Daughters: Evangelical Women and the Power of Submission* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997).

⁷⁰ Ibid.



(both from local, regional, and denominational), and inadequate compensation.⁷¹

In the same study, Kim and Ross (2003) also cite frequent moving as an added “stressful” factor for Asian American clergywomen. For example, 72.5 percent of Asian American clergywomen reported that they moved in the past five years, compared to 66.7 percent of African American and 62.5 percent of Hispanic American clergywomen. Within the past three years, 55 percent of Asian American, 52 percent of African American, and 48 percent of Hispanic American clergywomen moved at least once.

With respect to compensation and salary for Asian American clergywomen, Kim and Ross present an intriguing pair of findings. First, approximately 56 percent of Asian American clergywomen reported that they do not receive sufficient salary in their current appointment, compared to 67 percent of Hispanic, 81 percent of African American, and 86 percent of multi-racial clergywomen. Such lack of financial support is considered the major challenge they face in ministry. A first-generation Korean American clergywoman in a cross-cultural appointment reported, “I don’t know what is an acceptable package of equitable salary support any more.” On one hand, compared to her Korean American male clergy colleague she said,

“I don’t get paid as much as he does.” On the other hand she is not serving a Korean American congregation. “I don’t know whether it’s due to my gender or ethnicity or the [current] appointment that is the core reason for my under-pay.” And lowering her voice, she almost whispered, “Besides, I wasn’t taught to raise my voice over materialistic and financial matters. Both Confucian culture and Christian religion are discouraging me to mention clearly about my pay in the church.” Certainly in this instance, this Korean American clergywoman attributes her lower compensation to the intersection of discrimination based on her race and gender.

The perception of a “glass ceiling” also frustrates many second generation Asian American women leaders. “How do we bring change? How many years does it take for women leaders to progress?” asks Melanie Mar Chow of Asian American Christian Fellowship, a campus fellowship. “The individual woman’s progress has been made without accompanying structural change... When do you give up? At what point? The glass ceiling is so low and moves; it either shuts down or is flattened.”⁷²

With respect to Catholic women’s advancement, the Canon Law Society of America, an influential group of Roman Catholic scholars, both priests and lay (men), concluded in October 1995 that ordaining women as deacons would be appropriate and consistent with both Catholic theology and past practices. While deacons are not priests, ordination at the level of deacon was preliminary to becoming a priest in history of the Catholic Church.⁷³ As such, deacons have authority to do all a priest does, except celebrate mass. That is, deacons can preach sermons, administer communion and baptism, officiate at marriages, and carry out other rites. In October 2002, however, the Advisers to the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine, a highly influential panel, concluded that no historical or theological basis exists for ordaining women deacons.⁷⁴

⁷¹ A few recent studies also document problems of cross-cultural/cross-racial appointments in the United Methodist Church from Asian American clergy perspectives. For example, Choi, Young Eun, “Cross-cultural/Cross-racial Ministry: The Case of North Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church,” (D.Min. Thesis, The Chicago Theological Seminary, Illinois, 1996); Kim, Young-Il, *Knowledge Attitude and Experience Ministry in the Cross-cultural Context* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1992); and Pak, Grace, Jong Woo Park, and Phillips Soo Y. Whang, et al., *Witness from the Middle: Korean-American Pastors in Non-Korean Local Churches in the United Methodist Church* (Nashville, TN: General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, the United Methodist Church, 1999).

⁷² Interview with Melanie Mar Chow by Young Lee Hertig (March 5, 2004).

⁷³ “New Deacons Legal, Canon Law Experts Say,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 12, 1995, sect. 1, p. 13; mentioned in *America: The national Catholic Weekly*, March 8, 2004, p. 16.

⁷⁴ *The Lutheran* 15, no. 2 (December 2002): 52.

SEXUALITY AND MARITAL STATUS

A nationwide study of racial-ethnic minority clergywomen in the United Methodist denomination found that 109 of 209 clergywomen were married or remarried at the time of the study. The rest, a little less than 50 percent of ordained racial-ethnic minority UMC clergywomen, self identified as “single.”⁷⁵ Among them, 33 percent of Asian American, 43 percent of Hispanic American and 58 percent of African American clergywomen self-reported as “singles.” Compared to Chaves study (1997) of clergywomen across mainline denominations in the United States, which found that approximately 27 percent of clergywomen are single, this disproportionately high rate of single clergywomen of color in the UMC is a noteworthy finding which needs further probing.

While some racial-ethnic minority clergywomen mentioned some “advantages” of being single in doing ministry, many voiced loneliness and involuntary circumstantial causal factors for being single. An Asian American clergywoman in her forties, for example, reflects her life-style as a single in this way: “Because I don’t have children [of my own], I can spend more energy and quality time to devote myself in children’s ministry. I feel that if I have to care for my own children at home and then to come to the church to care for Sunday School children again, I would be completely exhausted.”⁷⁶ A self-identified multi-racial clergywoman also voiced, “. . . this constant move every two or three years can be quite taxing on family members. But I don’t have to worry about that [as a single].”⁷⁷ Whether being single is advantageous for their ministry or not, single clergywomen’s reflections on their marital status tend to come often as afterthoughts. That is, once they find themselves as singles, they reflect upon both positive and negative effects of their marital status on ministry.

CATHOLIC WOMEN IN MINISTRY

In the Catholic Church, while ordination to the priesthood and the diaconate is reserved for men, women

have been increasingly visible in various ministerial roles. But most national studies contain sparse information about the presence of Asian and Pacific women. With the exception of the very recent Asian Pastoral Institutes (initiated in 2003), training for Asian and Pacific women has taken place in the training forums for the Catholic Church in general. Nevertheless, leadership has been exercised in many different ways by Asian and Pacific Catholic women. This section will review how this is taking place nationally, in dioceses, locally and in religious orders.

The Office for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees of the Catholic bishops’ conference has had an Asian professional staff member since the early 1980’s. The first was a Vietnamese priest, who was succeeded by two Asian women both Filipina, including the present coordinator for ethnic ministries. Their advisory task force and national ethnic consultants have included eight Asian and Pacific women, both laywomen and sisters. Asian women were members of the event committee and coordinating staff for Encuentro 2000, a national gathering that celebrated the Catholic vision for the third millennium “Many Faces in God’s House.” The bishop’s conference also has a National Advisory Board (NAC) which has had Asians as regional representatives and one, a Japanese American from Hawaii served as chairperson. Increasingly, the various offices of the bishops’ conference have included Asian and Pacific Islanders, especially women in their committees for national projects.

In dioceses, Asian and Pacific women, including five laywomen and four sisters, have served as diocesan directors for ethnic or Asian offices, and one as director of research and planning. They have been a moving force in several large dioceses (San Francisco, Seattle, Los Angeles, Oakland, Chicago, New York, St. Paul/Minneapolis) in developing ministry with Asian and Pacific communities, as well as providing communication with Catholics at large.

Locally, one national study notes Asian and Pacific Islanders in many parishes are active in various ways. While this is not broken down by gender, nevertheless as with Catholic women in general, Asian women serve a substantial role, especially in religious education and social action programs. Also on a local level, women are leaders in their specific ethnic communities, for example leading prayer groups, and serving as catechists.

⁷⁵ Kim, Jung Ha and Rosetta R. Ross, *The Status of Racial-ethnic Minority Clergywomen*.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

The Catholic Church includes women in religious orders, more commonly known as sisters or women religious. While specific figures are not available for Asian and Pacific sisters, the Center for the Study of Religious Life in Chicago provided some general information. Many Asian and Pacific women have held positions of leadership and responsibility for their orders, such as president of a hospital administered by the order, or members of provincial councils. Sr. Lucia Tu, of Chinese background was elected Mother Superior of her order—Society Devoted to the Sacred Heart. Vietnamese sisters have also begun their own Holy Cross community in the United States. Some Asian ethnic communities such as the Chinese and Vietnamese have also established national organizations or gatherings specifically for sisters. Members of the Congregation of the Religious of the Virgin Mary, the first all-Filipino religious order of women founded in the Philippines in 1684 by Mother Ignacia del Espiritu Santo, serve parishes and schools in California, New Jersey, and Hawaii.

Thus in many ways and for many years, Asian and Pacific women have taken on leadership roles in their communities and in the Catholic Church. In truly Asian and Pacific tradition, they have gone about their ministry with a quiet dedication.

GENDER CONSCIOUSNESS

Studies on Asian American women and their religious experiences point to the importance of considering multi-layered identity markers, such as age, generation, ethnicity, class, and gender.⁷⁸ Gender consciousness is just one factor for understanding the experiences of Asian American women leaders. Nevertheless, gender consciousness and internalized sexism play a very important role in the lives of Asian American women leaders.

In a survey conducted in Korea regarding female pastoral leaders, only 2.5 percent of the women responded positively to women preaching and leading worship.⁷⁹ This shows a wide discrepancy between the idea of gender consciousness and the reality of inter-

nalized sexism where male leadership is normative. Despite the lack of support, most Asian American women leaders (lay and ordained) share positive experiences in their leadership roles and there are signs that internalized sexism is waning.

The experience of a Japanese American female professional's journey towards a greater role in a church with exclusively male leadership illustrates this. With the collaboration of male clergy and a male lay leader, this pioneering woman was able to bring cultural change. When she was invited to the church's leadership council meeting, she initially understood her role was to serve the men snacks. But when the council chairman told her she was to make decisions and not serve, she realized her internalized patriarchal image of leadership. As a professional woman, it did not take her long to shift gears. She invited more women to the group and gradually brought about significant cultural change. It took nudging by two male leaders for her to see herself as a decision maker in her church. Rather than blaming women in the church for their lack of support of female leaders, proactive male leaders are needed to break through the internalized sexism that families and churches have inculcated.⁸⁰

Though it appears that Asian American women are gradually being incorporated into congregational leadership, the styles and expectations of women in ministry or lay leadership remains a complex question. Traditional images of Asian American female leaders as soft, conciliatory, non-threatening, and with high interpersonal skills are more acceptable than aggressive and authoritarian ones. Thus Asian American women often face limited choices of leadership styles.

On the other hand, Asian American leaders are still searching for styles and images of leadership that are more culturally appropriate and hopefully open to greater options for women. In a vacuum of widely accepted alternative leadership images, intra and inter conflict among Asian American leaders remains volatile. When Asian American pastoral leaders exercise their leadership differently from the traditional image, the congregation responds with ambiguity.

⁷⁸ Karen Chai, "Competing for the Second Generation: English-Language Ministry in a Korean Protestant Church," in Stephen Warner and Judith G. Wittner, eds., *Gatherings in Diaspora* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1998), pp. 295–331; Helen Rose Ebaugh and Janet Saltzman Chafetz, *Religion and the New Immigrants: Continuities and Adaptations in Immigrant Congregations*, (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2001); Jung Ha Kim, *Bridge-makers and Cross-bearers* (N.Y.; London: Oxford University Press, 1997); and Gale Yee, *Poor Banished Children of Eve: Women as Evil in the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003).

⁷⁹ Nam Soon Kang, "Is the Korean Church a Community of Equals?": Korean Churchwomen's Consciousness and Their Positions in the Church." *The Journal of Korean Feminist Theology* 24: 63-88.

CHAPTER FIVE: LEADERSHIP FORMATION

CALLING AND DISCERNMENT THROUGH COMMUNITY

For most Asian Americans, discerning a “calling” to full-time ministry is not an individual spiritual exercise; it is far more than a business between “me and God.” Rather, the entire family becomes intimately involved. During this process, the “called” individual often faces stiff parental and familial opposition, particularly if one comes from a non-Christian family or from an immigrant family that fully embraces the “model minority” myth/dream. One Asian American college campus staff laments the difficulty of motivating Asian American students to give up the American Dream against their parents’ wishes and follow God’s call, with bare minimum income and no healthcare coverage.⁸¹ In short, most Asian American young people who are exploring a call to ministry face an initial hurdle of how to follow Jesus without dishonoring their parents.

Given this and other challenges, Asian American congregations have important roles to play in this area. However, for various reasons, many young Asian Americans are not turning to their churches for assistance in this decision. First, some Asian American congregations come from cultural backgrounds that place little value on the vocation of ministry; therefore, some congregations do not encourage their young people, particularly their brightest and best, to pursue ministry. Second, many Asian American congregations are independent and non-denominational. The leaders of these (particularly immigrant) churches are often unfamiliar with various assessment tools that might help those who are in the discernment process and different options for theological education. Finally, due to language and cultural barriers, many Asian American young people are reluctant to consult with their church elders when it comes to personal matters such as their call to ministry. Consequently, too often, the discernment process of these individuals involves a few peers, thus failing to benefit from the wisdom of a larger, multi-generational congregational community.

Another complicating factor is that many Asian American young adults explore their calling during college, often away from their “home” churches. Recently, a number of studies noted that a significant number of Asian American college students are active in various evangelical Christian fellowship groups on campus.⁸² Many of these young people, having encountered positive Christian leadership experiences through campus ministry, begin to think about and explore their own calling (see chapter three). However, many of these collegiate fellowship groups are not able to offer the wisdom that emerges from longer life and congregational ministry experiences, communal wisdom that can help young individuals make decision with more care and seriousness. What is critically needed, then, is a more intentional partnership between local congregations and campus parachurch groups as they seek to do a better job in nurturing and guiding emerging young Christian leaders.

LEADERSHIP FORMATION AND SEMINARY EDUCATION

According to the annual reports of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) in the United States and Canada, the number of Asian and Pacific Islander (A/PI) seminarians has increased rapidly during the past three decades. In 1977, the first year ATS collected racial/ethnic information, ATS reported 494 A/PI students, or 1 percent of all seminarians. By 2003, 6,273 A/PI students were engaged in theological studies at ATS schools—approximately 8.2 percent of the total enrollment. This reflects a disproportionately higher percentage than the overall Asian American population (however, international students from Asia are not distinguished from Asian American students). Asians were 5.2 percent of those seeking Masters of Divinity degrees in the United States. Only 19.7 percent of the Asian M.Div. students were women, even though women constituted 35.7 percent of the total M.Div student population. While not all seminarians will serve as pastors in congregational settings (only 49 percent of ATS students are enrolled in Master of Divinity programs), the significant

⁸¹ Melanie Mar Chow, a senior staff of Japanese Evangelical Mission Society (JEMS) shared the difficulty of recruiting college campus staff during Young Lee Hertig’s interview with her on March 5th 2004.

⁸² Rudy Busto, “The Gospel According to the Model Minority?: Hazarding an Interpretation of Asian-American Evangelical College Students,” *Amerasia Journal* 22 (1): 133-47; Soyoung Park, “The Intersection of Religion, Ethnicity and Gender in the Identity Formation of Korean-American Evangelical Women” in Ho-Youn Kwon, Kwang Chung Kim, and Stephen Warner, eds. *Pilgrims and Missionaries from a Different Shore* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2001).

increase of A/PI seminarians indicates that, among other things, today's seminaries in the U. S. will play an even larger role in the shaping of present and future Asian American congregational experiences.⁸³

Many Asian and Asian Americans who are called into pastoral ministry enter seminaries knowing they've made a countercultural choice. They enroll anticipating opportunities for theological and leadership formation. Regretfully, the Asian American seminarians generally find a dearth of mentors and role models there. Most Asian American seminarians attend schools that have predominantly white administrators and faculty (185 out of 207 ATS schools are predominantly white—three are Asian American). These students often do not have mentors who can assist them with the task of understanding their vocational calling in light of who they are. One Asian American faculty member, reflecting upon his own seminary training experience, noted:

Slowly I came to understand the complexity of being seen as an Asian American... And yet there were no mentors during my own education (and no mentors now on my faculty) with whom I can discuss the complexity of what all this means—both for me and for the institution.⁸⁴

During the past decade, the number of full-time A/PI faculty members hired by ATS schools increased significantly. In 1991, 51 full-time A/PI faculty members taught in ATS schools; in 2003, 123 did. As mentioned in the last chapter this is 3.6 percent of all full-time faculty and only 19 are women. While this is sizable growth, it is still below the overall Asian American population percentage. More significantly, this does not match the growth of A/PI student enrollment in those schools—particularly among women. If ATS schools are to improve their ability to equip A/PI students for ministries in the Asian American context, the hiring of more A/PI faculty members who can mentor and train these students must be a priority.

Another critical factor to be addressed is curricula. A gap exists between theological education modeled on the European and American church experiences and the practical need to equip Asian American students for Asian American contexts. The good news is that a growing number of seminaries offer Asian American ministry courses and programs that seek to address challenges and issues in the Asian American contexts. This is particularly true for many “mainline” seminaries that belong to denominations with organized Asian American national caucuses and offices to support the causes of Asian American ministries. Many of these seminaries sponsor Asian American ministry centers or programs, offering various resources to their current students as well as those who are currently engaged in Asian American congregational ministries. Among the best-funded centers are the PANA Institute at the Pacific School of Religion and the Asian American Center at McCormick. (see appendix A).

Most theologically conservative seminaries, however, have yet to make similar commitments to Asian American or other racial minority groups. According to the ATS report the largest seminaries in the U. S. belong to this category—many of them draw significant numbers of Asian American students.⁸⁵ Most of these students are not able to participate in leadership formation experiences that include the mentoring presence of A/PI faculty and the availability of Asian American theological and practical resources. A recent study noted that many graduates of such seminaries have not developed an appropriately contextualized philosophy of ministry and theological framework that addresses many of the challenges and issues unique in their Asian American setting, uncritically employing various white evangelical resources and programs.⁸⁶

A third factor is the inability of ATS seminaries to respond adequately to the diverse Asian American constituents. Many seminaries still view their Asians students as internationals. Those with Asian American programs tend to focus on serving one Asian language

⁸³ Statistics found at the Association of Theological Schools Web site: www.ATS.edu

⁸⁴ This quotation is drawn from presentations and discussions held at the ATS Seminar for Racial/Ethnic Faculty Members at Predominantly White ATS Institutions, October 5-7, 2001.

⁸⁵ Ten largest theological schools by student enrollment in 2002-3 are the following: Fuller Theological Seminary (4,138); Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (3,008); New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (2,513); Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (1,903); Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (1,745); Dallas Theological Seminary (1,598); Southeastern Theological Seminary (1,508); Asbury Theological Seminary (1,474); Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (1,290); and Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary (1,271).

⁸⁶ Russell Jeung, “Asian American Pan-ethnic Formation and Congregational Culture,” *op. cit.*

group exclusively. English-speaking Asian Americans find it difficult to find a place for themselves within these frameworks. For instance, the seminary field education program is normally developed with white middle class constituencies in mind. The sharp contrast between the ethnic Asian American church structures and the seminary's field education structure often places English-speaking Asian seminarians in a tug-of-war between the two rigid systems. The monocultural seminary structures on the one hand and another sub-mono-cultural ethnic minority church on the other can be one of the most disempowering experiences. While Asian American church leaders are partially responsible for this development, seminary administrators need to better understand the diversity of their Asian American constituency.

LEADERSHIP MENTORING IN THE MINISTRY CONTEXTS

Although no formal study has been conducted, anecdotal evidence suggests a considerable attrition rate among younger pastors, particularly among American-born clergy.⁸⁷ The director of an Asian American para-church group reported hearing that as many as 66 percent (two-thirds) of American-born Chinese American pastors quit ministry altogether after only a few years.

Many Korean American pastors and seminary faculty also noted that a large number of second-generation pastors leave ministry after a few years of struggling in their ethnic immigrant churches. Many young Asian American pastors mentioned the lack of mentors who know the unique challenges of serving in Asian immigrant settings and who are able to provide appropriate support and guidance.

During the past decade, partly in response to this disconcerting trend of attrition, efforts have been made to support and mentor young Asian American pastors. First, a few of the larger Asian American congregations have intentionally recruited a few seminarians and recent graduates as pastoral interns, offering mentoring programs and hands-on ministry experiences. While these opportunities enable younger apprentices to experience invaluable leadership formation, as of yet, too few congregations are practicing

this model of mentoring to have a significant impact. Given that such a program calls for substantial time (pastors meet with interns regularly) and financial commitments from the church (some churches pay their interns while others do not) and its pastoral staff team, developing such a program requires from congregations an unusually generous vision and commitment. While only a few Asian American congregations have embraced this model, it is currently drawing attention from other congregations and interested seminaries and para-church organizations.

Secondly, many denominations have Asian American caucuses or centers that sponsor regular gatherings for their constituencies which, among other things, promote mentoring relationships and other types of networking. While Asian American pastors who belong to these denominations benefit from such offerings, a large number of their peers do not have access to such programs since they serve in non-denominational congregations or belong to denominations that tend to ignore the Asian American context. Furthermore, even within those denominations that intentionally reach out to Asian American congregations, most of the programs and resources are aimed at serving larger Asian ethnic groups, often overlooking smaller ethnic groups that are less visible and underserved.

Finally, several Asian American para-church organizations offer various resources and gatherings that provide mentoring to younger pastors (see chapter six). Most of these organizations do not see mentoring younger pastors as their primary aim; however, they nonetheless provide a valuable relational network and helpful resources to Asian American pastors. Recently, an inter-denominational Asian American Christian Leadership Conference held in Los Angeles drew more than 300 Asian American pastors, seminarians and lay leaders. Such conferences not only offer helpful workshops and training to young pastors but also connect them to potential mentors and peers who can provide them with much needed guidance and support.

Many of these efforts to support Asian American young pastors are sporadic and very recent. It is not certain how well they will be able to support thousands of Asian American pastors, particularly

⁸⁷ Cf. Justin Der, ABC Pastor Discouragement and Dropout: A Study Based on the Responses of 64 Pastors (Unpublished paper: Stanford University, 2001)

⁸⁸ Asian American Leadership Conference 2004 (<http://www.aalc2004.org/>).

those who have just begun ministry, and help prevent them from quitting. What is critically needed is an empirical study of the current experiences of Asian American pastors, assessing their ability to sustain excellence in their ministry for long term. Secondly, in light of the foregoing discussion, representatives from Asian American congregations, seminaries that train Asian American students, denominations and Asian American para-church ministries should enter into a dialogue that would seek to identify different ways to mentor and train young Asian American seminarians and clergy. If nearly two thirds of Asian American seminary graduates drop out of ministry within the first two years of pastoral experience, such a dialogue and partnership is an urgent necessity.

LEADERSHIP FORMATION AND SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Incessant busyness and the possibility of burn-out are unfortunate concomitants of ministry in all settings. However, within the Asian American setting, these are even more daunting and persistent threats to healthy pastoral ministry. Many Asian American immigrant congregations are small and continue to face challenges of settling down in a foreign land. Like most immigrant families they serve, these congregations operate in a survival mode. Everyone, including the pastoral staff, works long hours. In this context, it is not unusual to find Asian American immigrant clergy who neglect to care for themselves.

A critical aspect of self-care that Asian American pastors can easily overlook is their spiritual direction. Their achievement-oriented culture encourages perfectionism and a strong work ethic, driving them to pay constant attention to their performance but not the state of their "being." Over the years, many pastors have felt depleted in energy, joy and purposefulness; some leave ministry as casualties of burn-out while others battle frustration and disillusionment.

In recent years, a growing number of Protestant clergy and lay leaders have started to embrace the practice of "spiritual direction," the art of centering on God by learning to listen to God and by learning to discern the leading of the Holy Spirit. This tradition of caring for one's soul can be a significant tool of healing and of on-going refreshment for many Asian American pastors who struggle with excessive drive and busy ministry schedules. However, spiritual direction has not yet been embraced as a priority by many Asian American pastors.

An important component of spiritual direction is meeting regularly with a mentor who is also one's "spiritual director." Currently, at least within Protestant Asian American settings, it is very difficult to find Asian American spiritual directors, individuals who are familiar with both spiritual direction and Asian American family, congregational and personal experiences and challenges. Secondly, many congregations do not value their pastors' spiritual refreshment enough to free their leaders to invest time in this area. In addition to meeting with a spiritual director, pastors need time for regular personal and communal retreats. Finally, most denominations do not seem to identify spiritual direction as an important aspect of leadership formation. Denominations need to play a more proactive role in encouraging clergy and congregations to invest in this area.⁸⁹

Healthy congregations result from healthy leadership. One of the hardships many Asian American immigrant congregations experience is constant schisms that result from leadership conflicts and unchecked ambitions.⁹⁰ According to one study, a primary reason why many second-generation young people decide to leave their immigrant churches is frequent church fights among leaders and the pain of resulting schisms.⁹¹ A significant way to promote health in Asian American congregations is to value and affirm the health of the leadership. One way to achieve this goal is to introduce the time-honored tradition of spiritual direction.

⁸⁹ In June 2000, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops approved the *Basic Plan for the Ongoing Formation of Priests*, a set of guidelines for the development of local programs for the ongoing formation of priests, which was subsequently reviewed by the Vatican Congregation for the clergy.

⁹⁰ Eui Hang Shin and Hyung Park, "An Analysis of Causes of Schisms in Ethnic Churches: The Case of Korean-American Churches," *Sociological Analysis* 49: 234-48.

⁹¹ Sukhwan Oh, *Christian Korean American Alliance Survey Result, 1992-93*. (Bellflower, CA: CKAA, 1995).

CHAPTER SIX: INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONAL SUPPORT FOR ASIAN AMERICAN CLERGY

Minority caucuses and racial justice groups in Protestant denominations reflect the contrasting aspects of denominational treatment of racial minorities.⁹² Negatively, they represent what racial minorities label “paternalism” or “tokenism.” On the positive side, they represent what racial minorities label “empowerment” or “partnership.” Asian American clergy in these denominations experience both sides of this relational dialectic.

“Paternalism” and “tokenism” refer to situations in which racial minorities find themselves constrained as white leaders maintain institutional dominance. Rev. Donald Ng, Senior Pastor of the First Chinese Baptist Church of San Francisco, described his concerns about such developments in his denomination in an address to the American Baptist Church’s Asian American Caucus:

First of all, the denomination needs to continue to both show interest in and to include Asian American Baptists in the heart of its mission and direction. Unless we go beyond superficial involvement and invite Asians to help make decisions about not only their future, but also the future of the entire denominational family, they will take their mah jong elsewhere to play....If [American Baptist] regions are sincerely interested in starting new Asian congregations, would they be willing to attend a training and orientation event planned by the Asian churches for their learning? Are they willing to see themselves as students and try a new paradigm of relationships?⁹³

The opposite to “paternalism” and “tokenism” is “empowerment.” The 1992 report by the United Methodist Church’s General Commission on Race and Religion defined empowerment this way:

Empowerment is to facilitate people making decisions about their own destiny; identifying their own visions and needs and determining how best to meet those needs. Empowerment is the way of ensuring that barriers are removed and doors opened to persons traditionally denied access to power—to information, to resources, to opportunities.⁹⁴

Below we examine efforts to support Asian American clergy in the three largest mainline denominations—the United Methodist Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the Presbyterian Church (USA). We will also look at the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church as an evangelical denominational model. Our concern is to show where denominations have successfully empowered Asian American clergy and where challenges remain.

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

At first glance, Asian Americans in the UMC seem to have an adequate supply of clergy given the size of their constituency. Asian Americans make up 0.9 percent of UMC laity and 2 percent of clergy. However, the situation looks less satisfactory when we look past the umbrella category of Asian American and look at individual ethnic groups. By far the largest Asian American group in the UMC is Korean Americans, a consequence of the significant role that Methodist missionaries played in the evangelization of Korea. Korean American churches in the UMC have both an adequate supply of clergy and adequate Korean-language materials to facilitate church life. Many other Asian American groups, in contrast, lack both adequate leadership and materials in their language.

At the 2000 General Conference, the UMC passed a resolution authorizing the General Board of Global Ministries to form a committee that would be staffed primarily by Asian Americans and that would oversee a proposed budget of nearly \$2 million over four years to further ministries to Asian Americans.⁹⁵ This includes money for the development of new Asian American congregations, new leadership and training,

⁹² These include the Asian American Baptist Caucus, the Asian Presbyterian Caucus, the National Federation of Asian American United Methodists, the Pacific American and Asian American Ministries of UCC, the Episcopal Asian American Strategies Task Force, and the North American Pacific Asian Disciples of Christ.

⁹³ Donald Ng, “Reaching Asian Americans for Christ in the 21st Century,” (address to the Asian American Baptist Caucus Convocation, 1999).

⁹⁴ General Commission on Religion and Race Report to the 1992 General Conference, p. 3.

⁹⁵ The text of the resolution is available at www.gc2000.umc.org/pets/PET/TEXT/p30863.asp.

community ministries, and language resources. The fruits of the UMC's commitments to Asian American ministries will be evident in the years ahead.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

The ELCA has the lowest proportion of Asian Americans of the three mainline denominations—0.4 percent in 1999. Among active clergy, 0.8 percent are Asian Americans. As with the UMC, the number of Asian American clergy disguises the fact that many ELCA Asian ethnic congregations suffer from a shortage of trained leaders. Moreover, the clergy that are available often find heavy demand for their services, given that their skills make them unique in their ethnic communities.

Korean American congregations are particularly strong in their insistence on exclusively male leadership.

As with the Methodists, more Asian-language resources are needed to support immigrant congregations. Many of these congregations,

particularly when they are new, receive financial support from the ELCA's Division of Outreach and/or from their synods. However, the ELCA's goal is for these congregations to become self-supporting.

The ELCA's *Asian and Pacific Islander Ministry Strategy* calls for several steps to be taken to facilitate leadership development. Of primary importance is providing more training for Asian American leaders, including full-time clergy, bi-vocational clergy, and lay leaders. The ELCA is also interested in recruiting more Asian Americans to serve on denominational boards and as faculty members at ELCA seminaries. To increase the availability of Asian-language resources, the ELCA is in the process of identifying one language specialist from each Asian American community to be contracted part-time to work with the appropriate denominational departments and publishing houses. The ELCA's Commission for Multicultural Ministries is monitoring progress toward the goals listed in the *Asian and Pacific Islander Ministry Strategy*. However,

meeting these goals will require action at multiple levels throughout the denomination. How far the ELCA will get toward these goals remains to be seen.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)

Like Methodists, American Presbyterians had an historic role in evangelizing Korea and consequently benefited from Korean immigration to the United States. The number of Korean American congregations in the PC(USA) grew from 20 in the early 1970s to 350 by 1999⁹⁶. To accommodate the needs of Korean American pastors and lay leaders, many of whom have limited English ability, the PC(USA) allows Korean American congregations to bypass the normal governance structure, which divides the denomination into regional presbyteries, and instead affiliate with a non-geographical Korean American presbytery.

While the PC(USA) has made considerable strides in empowering Korean Americans, several challenges remain. A report entitled *Strategies for Korean New Church Development* describes the cultural clash between PC(USA) officials and Korean immigrants which limits the PC(USA)'s success in recruiting Korean immigrant congregations:

*The strictness in procedures insisted upon by presbytery committees and other judicatories in their dealings with Korean immigrant clergy, when viewed from the Korean point of view, can also be inflexible in face of persons of rather different background and also rather different ministerial context. What often are adhered to in the name of "high standards" are also standards that fit and are appropriate for the Anglo ministerial candidates and ministries.*⁹⁷

Other challenges result from divisions within PC(USA)'s Korean American constituency. Korean American women who aspire to ordained ministry rarely find Korean American congregations willing to hire them. Resistance to women pastors, of course, is not limited to Korean Americans. However, Korean American congregations are particularly strong in their insistence on exclusively male leadership.⁹⁸ Yet another

⁹⁶ Office of Korean Congregational Enhancement, National Mission Division, Presbyterian Church (USA). *Strategies for Korean New Church Development*. <http://www.pcusa.org/raciaethnic/Korean/strategy.htm>, accessed September 16, 2002.

⁹⁷ *ibid.*

⁹⁸ Ai Ra Kim, *Women Struggling for a New Life: The Role of Religion in the Cultural Passage from Korea to America* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996).

challenge for the denomination is to find ways to support the emerging second-generation Korean American pastoral leadership, which is increasingly at odds with the established immigrant-generation leadership.

Due to their much smaller numbers, other Asian American groups in the PC(USA) have fewer resources than do Korean Americans; no other Asian American group, for example, has access to a non-geographical presbytery. The Office of Asian Congregational Enhancement works with these smaller Asian American groups to produce resources for leadership development (including leadership training conferences), help new churches development projects, and assist with other issues related to Asian American ministries. In response to the growing number of Southeast Asians, the PC(USA) established the Advisory Committee on Southeast Asian Ministries in 1988. The purpose of this committee is to “assist the General Assembly to develop denominational strategies to help governing bodies and appropriate committees in relating to the Southeast Asian groups.”⁹⁹

CHRISTIAN AND MISSIONARY ALLIANCE CHURCH

Though Pentecostal and evangelical denominations have not had a long association with Asian Americans, many have been benefited from the recent surge in Asian immigration. Theological compatibility and a sense of marginalization from the American mainstream are two possible reasons for this growth. Furthermore, Asian American church planting and church growth vitality as well as increasing Asian American financial influence have encouraged Pentecostal and evangelical denominational responsiveness. Most of the denominations with a significant Asian American presence have established inter-cultural or racial/ethnic specific staffing and funding to facilitate the planting of Asian American congregations and sustenance of Asian American pastors. Though Asian Americans in most of these denominations do not organize caucuses, the work of advocacy exists and is often times quite successful.

The Christian and Missionary Alliance is smaller than the previous three mainline Protestant denomi-

nations. But it is a good example of an evangelical denomination that is moving away from a “paternalistic” relationship with its Asian American leaders toward one of partnership and mutual empowerment. Thirty percent of the denomination’s congregations are racial-ethnic (CM&A uses the term “intercultural”); of this group, 80 percent are Asian American. Unlike denominations that require their minority populations to relate primarily to regional judicatories or associations—which has the effect of disempowering these groups locally—the CM&A intentionally supports ethnic language districts or associations and encourages ethnic congregations to relate to geographical districts. Each ethnic language association or district works with the denomination’s director of Intercultural Ministries. By organizing according to ethnic language, each group has relatively greater access to denominational leadership and structure. Furthermore, each association or district has the opportunity and resources to develop indigenous leadership and contextualized ministries.

TABLE 9: CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY AND ALLIANCE INTERCULTURAL CHURCHES (JUNE 1999)

DISTRICTS		ASSOCIATIONS	
Cambodian	43	Vietnamese	74
Haitian South	21	Chinese	68
Hmong	81	Dega	3
Korean	56	African-American	34
Spanish Central	27	Filipino	23
Spanish Eastern	46	Subtotal	685

Source: <http://www.cmalliance.org/nem/intercultural/churches.jsp>

This portrait does not suggest that competition for resources and instances of “tokenism” or “paternalism” no longer exist in the CM&A. Nevertheless, this denominational structure offers a model where each ethnic language group has the space and resources to cultivate its own leadership and focus on strengthening its ministry among its own population. As a result of this approach to Asian American ministry, greater institutional energy can be focused on developing resources for helping ethnic language congregations transition to English speaking Asian American ministries.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Office of Asian Congregational Enhancement, *Asian Congregational Enhancement*. <http://www.pcusa.org/raciaethnic/asian/index/htm>, accessed September 6, 2002.

¹⁰⁰ Some insight into the CM&A denominational culture can be gleaned from Joseph S. Kong, *Intercultural Churches in Transition from First to Second and Third Generations* (Report of the Office of Intercultural Ministries, 1999)

Rather than divide a denomination into different interest groups, CM&A provides a model of how to build unity without demanding uniformity and how to develop a common mission while empowering diverse styles of ministry.

ASIAN AMERICAN PARA-CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR SUPPORT FOR ASIAN AMERICAN CLERGY

Campus ministry illustrates the importance of parachurch organizations among Asian Americans. Second-generation Asian American evangelicals on university campuses have been noticed by the media and a few scholars. Indeed, on major university campuses, such as UC Berkeley, UT Austin, Columbia, MIT, and Yale, Asian American Christian Bible study and fellowship groups are often among the largest and most active student associations. Asian American college students account for about one-quarter of participants at the last InterVarsity Urbana Missions Conference in 2000. The story of Asian American religions on college and university campuses is particularly important, given that record numbers of Asian Americans now attend colleges and universities. In 1997 Asian Americans made up 3 percent of the U.S. population, 4 percent of enrollment in all public school districts (National Center for Education Statistics), and 5.3 percent of college and university freshmen students in the U.S. By fall 2001 Asian Americans/Asians had increased their proportion by 30 percent to 6.9 percent of all entering freshmen. The increased presence of Asian American evangelicals on college campuses is also part of the increasing visibility of evangelicals on the campus scene and in parachurch organizations.¹⁰¹

While mainline Protestant institutions have historically provided support and resources to their Asian American constituency, their support resources were often not utilized by those Asian American congregations that were non-denominational or belonged to more conservative denominations.¹⁰² In order to meet

their own needs, these congregations turned to leading mainstream evangelical publications and professional networks and also to a small but growing number of evangelical Asian American para-church organizations.¹⁰³ The following four para-church organizations have offered various resources and support to Asian American pastors and other Christian leaders. This section will briefly describe the nature of each ministry and will assess its effectiveness as well as limitations in supporting Asian American clergy.

JAPANESE EVANGELICAL MISSION SOCIETY (JEMS)

In 1952, JEMS was formed primarily to help Japanese American congregations be more effective in evangelism, discipleship, and missions in Japan. Today, JEMS ministry partners include a growing number of other Asian American congregations, particularly Chinese American and pan-Asian American. It seeks to achieve its mission through three avenues of ministry: overseas mission work in Japan and South America, campus ministry through Asian American Christian Fellowship (AACF), and the Mount Hermon Summer Conference and other conferences and retreats.

These ministries are coordinated and led by the 20 headquarter staff members who come from diverse ethnic backgrounds.¹⁰⁴ Some staff members are seminary trained while others are part-time seminary students, benefiting from leadership training provided by senior staff members. These staff members, partnering with Asian American pastors, offer various programs that might benefit Asian American congregations, ranging from summer camps for families to leadership seminars. Although evangelism and discipleship are the primary aims of JEMS, the ministry also provides support and resources for Asian American clergy, both directly and indirectly. On one hand, JEMS sponsors occasional leadership retreats and seminars during which Asian American pastors have opportunities to explore various Asian American issues related to pastoral leadership. More broadly, the JEMS ministry supports pastors by developing

¹⁰¹ Neil Swidey, "God on the Quad," *Boston Globe Magazine* (November 30, 2003).

¹⁰² Russell Jeung, "Asian American Pan-ethnic Formation and Congregational Culture" op. cit., 223-32.

¹⁰³ Jeung, 230-32.

¹⁰⁴ JEMS currently has 20 paid staff members and many volunteers.

networks and support systems via collaborative training sessions and camps. Many pastors who participate in the JEMS ministry particularly appreciate the friendships and partnerships they have forged with other Asian American pastors.

While JEMS offers many valuable services to more than 150 Asian American congregations and their pastors, its ability to increase support to broader Asian American pastors is limited. Geographically, while some member churches are located in the Midwest and the East coast, most are in California and other Western states. Given that JEMS' ministry happens largely through regular gatherings such as camps, conferences and retreats, most of which are held in the Western states, its impact is primarily in the west coast. Its ability to support Asian American congregations in other regions is somewhat limited. In addition, although JEMS enjoys increasing ethnic diversity in its staff and in church membership, many outsiders still recognize it as a primarily Japanese American para-church movement, thus restricting its ability to attract and to serve pastors who work in other Asian American congregations, particularly those who serve in immigrant congregations. Finally, while it promotes relationship building among pastors and occasionally explores the issue of pastoral leadership in its seminars, JEMS does not seem to identify pastoral leadership development as one of its primary mission, thus confining its ability to produce programs and resources that might directly address various Asian American leadership issues and concerns.

IWA

Like JEMS, IWA also began as a primarily Japanese American para-church movement that aimed to relate the Gospel more effectively to people of Japanese ancestry.¹⁰⁵ However, during its two decades of ministry, IWA also extended its ministry scope to a broader Asian American audience. During its early years, it focused on the development of some culturally sensitive evangelism tools and on building consult-



ing relationships with Asian American churches and their pastors, mainly in Southern California. Through consulting work, IWA began to broaden its ministry focus beyond evangelism, covering areas such as spiritual renewal and leadership formation. Since 1992, after its very successful first national conference, *Coloring beyond the Lines*, IWA began to extend its ministry beyond Southern California.

Currently, IWA is led by four paid staff members, all of whom are third-generation Japanese Americans. The founder and current president of this organization provides key leadership in the areas of resource development as well as in speaking at various conferences and workshops. Although the size of the staff team is relatively small, IWA has been quite intentional about supporting and serving Asian American pastors and other Christian leaders through the following ways:

- Web-based resources for church leaders¹⁰⁶
- Leadership conferences held in different regions
- Workshops focusing on evangelism, discipleship and leadership training
- Consulting work with some key Asian American churches¹⁰⁷
- Creating networks among emerging Asian American Christian leaders

¹⁰⁵The name Iwa, in Japanese, means “rock”.

¹⁰⁶One of the primary aims of these resources is to enable pastors and lay leaders to be more effective in their ethnic congregational ministry.

¹⁰⁷Some of these churches include Evergreen Baptist Church in Rosemead, California and Christian Layman Church in the San Francisco Bay area, two very significant Asian American congregations.

While IWA has contributed much to the development of effective ministry among Asian American congregations and provided much needed resources to their pastors, its ministry nonetheless faces limitations and challenges. Like JEMS, although IWA is making an effort to widen its ministry spheres, it is still a California-based, Japanese-American focused ministry; thus, its ability to serve a broader network of Asian American pastors is still limited.¹⁰⁸ In addition, although IWA has developed many high-quality ministry tools that are culturally relevant, these tools help pastors in one dimension only, namely, the effectiveness of their ministry. To put it differently, like JEMS, IWA seems to focus on the “doing” of pastoral ministry while somewhat neglecting the “being” side of leadership formation. Finally, largely

due to fundraising challenges, the ministry has a very small paid staff team (three full-time and one part-time). While the team is continuing to produce many helpful resources in an efficient manner, its small size, nonetheless, restricts its

ability to expand and serve a larger number of Asian American pastors and lay leaders.

Among all the ethnic ministries in IVCF, Asian American ministries is the best organized and most effective in serving its staff workers.

INTERVARSITY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, an interdenominational, evangelical para-church group that focuses on collegiate campus ministry, is not an Asian American group. However, since the beginning of the 1990's, IVCF began to intentionally embrace a vision of becoming more multiethnic, thus committing itself to reaching out to students from all ethnic and racial backgrounds, including Asian Americans. Currently, IVCF employs 924 campus staff who work with 33,000 students. Of these, 105 campus staff and 4,200 students are Asian

American, which means one of every nine staff and one of every eight students is an Asian American.

During the past several years, a third-generation Japanese-American senior staff leader organized and led IV's Asian American ministries. With minimal staff support of its own (it has a part-time administrative person in addition to the director mentioned above), this ministry developed resources for IV staff workers who are Asian Americans and/or work with Asian American students¹⁰⁹ and regularly hosted IV's Asian American staff conferences, offering them an opportunity to learn more about various leadership issues in the Asian American context. The ministry also created a network among Asian American staff workers, allowing them to keep in touch with one another and to exchange various ministry ideas. Given that most of the Asian Americans staff members are recent college graduates in their twenties, the ministry offers a more balanced focus in addressing leadership issues that involve the “being” and “doing” of leadership formation.¹¹⁰ Among all the ethnic ministries in IVCF, Asian American ministries is the best organized and most effective in serving its staff workers.

IVCF effectively recruits Asian American staff workers from the pool of recent college graduates who are IV alums. However, due to lack of family and church understanding and appreciation of para-church ministries like IVCF, most Asian American staff workers face significant challenges in the area of fundraising and receive minimal moral support from their churches and families. Many staff workers are chronically under-funded and struggle with the stress of fundraising as well as on-going financial difficulty. Consequently, many experienced Asian American staff workers, particularly married male staff members, leave campus ministry. Many of these former staff workers currently serve as pastors in a number of key Asian American congregations.

In addition to fundraising and short tenures, another structural challenge Asian American staff members

¹⁰⁸ One of IWA's newsletters noted that its board members identified IWA's lack of visibility as its major problem, “that few people knew of and understood IWA's ministry”.

¹⁰⁹ These resources include a widely distributed book on Asian American discipleship called *Following Jesus without Dishonoring Your Parents* (IVP 1997), written by five Asian American staff members of IVCF, and a recent volume called *Invitation to Lead: Guidance for Emerging Asian American Leaders*, written by Paul Tokunaga, the director of IVCF's Asian American ministries.

¹¹⁰ IV's Asian American staff conference deals with issues such as “ethnic identity formation” and “relating to your Asian parents” as well as offering resources that might enhance their leadership skills.

face in IVCF is under-representation in senior leadership. Currently, IVCF has one vice president who is Asian American (a second-generation Chinese American woman), and one Asian American regional director. Since regional directors (there are fourteen regions) are the key decision-makers in InterVarsity, the lack of representation at this level prevents Asian American staff workers from participating in many decision-making processes, despite their significant number. Recently, IV's Asian American ministries department initiated the Daniel Project, an Asian American leadership program that aims to mentor and equip a selected number of young Asian American staff workers to prepare them to move into higher leadership positions. Some of the themes this program will cover are:

- Succeeding as a minority in a majority culture organization
- Ethnic identity issues
- Maximizing Asian American qualities in leadership
- Shepherding and developing young Asian American staff and student leaders
- Spiritual development as Asian American leaders.

CATALYST LEADERSHIP CENTER

Catalyst Leadership Center was launched ten years ago by a group of young second-generation Korean American pastors. Initially, this ministry began to address some of the needs in Korean American congregations, particularly those issues that related to the relationship between the Korean-speaking first-generation ministry and the English-speaking second-generation. However, over time, Catalyst began to address wider issues of Christian leadership, and is currently focusing on the task of nurturing emerging Asian American Christian leaders.

During the past ten years, Catalyst has ministered to more than 500 young Korean American and Asian American Christian leaders all across North America, particularly those who are serving on the East coast, Canada and the West Coast. During its first six years, Catalyst offered eight leadership conferences, offering various workshops as well as creating networks among those who serve in similar ministry contexts.

Then, during the following four years, Catalyst offered a summer modular course called "Asian American Spiritual Leadership Formation" on two different seminary campuses, inviting a selected number of seminarians and young pastors serving in those regions. Classes were taught by a team of 4-5 Asian American pastors and theologians. Finally, Catalyst is currently working on a three-year book project called *Developing Healthy Asian American Congregations*, a collaborative project that brings together writings and insights from thirteen Asian American Christian leaders. The book will be published in 2005 by InterVarsity Press.

Although the Catalyst Leadership Center identified Asian American leadership as its main ministry focus, its ability to serve and support Asian American pastors has been limited by its lack of a paid staff. All its activities are carried out by volunteer board members who are full-time pastors. Furthermore, although a group of churches and individuals support its ministry regularly, its budget is minimal, further limiting Catalyst's ministry scope and impact. Finally, as a young para-church ministry, Catalyst is still unsure about its audience. While many of its constituents are Korean Americans who are currently serving Korean immigrant churches, other significant leaders of this ministry are currently involved in pan-Asian American or multicultural ministries. Since the needs of these two groups are quite different, Catalyst ministry's ability to sharply focus on leadership and ministry issues are compromised as it seeks to serve both groups.

While the above four Asian American para-church ministries that support Asian American Christian leaders emerged from different contexts and serve different circles of constituents, they share an interdenominational and evangelical theological orientation. To be sure, many Asian American clergy members who belong to mainline denominations also participate in some of these para-church ministries; however, most of those who are involved in them serve in non-denominational congregations or belong to conservative denominations. Given their evangelical orientation, these para-church ministries tend to emphasize certain aspects of leadership development, particularly those areas that concern ministry effectiveness. What is often neglected and overlooked is providing care for the emotional and spiritual well-being of clergy.

Secondly, even within the parameter of enhancing ministry effectiveness, the focus is limited to those areas of ministry that are valued in evangelical settings, namely evangelism, discipleship and world missions. Those para-church groups that work with younger Asian American leaders, namely IVCF and Catalyst, however are beginning to address issues such as social justice, racial reconciliation and gender equality. Finally, due to budget and staff constraints, these para-church ministries are still serving relatively small groups of Asian American clergy, with their impact confined within certain geographic and ethnic boundaries.

ROMAN CATHOLIC INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

Asian and Pacific Catholics have been present in the Catholic Church in the U.S. for over 250 years. It should be noted that the documents of the Second Vatican Council (1965-1972) and subsequent statements as *Redemptoris Missio* teach ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue and the need for the Catholic faith to be inculturated. These also noted that Christianity began in Asia. However, it was not until 1975, with the church's involvement in the resettlement of refugees from Southeast Asia, that the central structures of the church began to regard Asian and Pacific Islanders as a presence in the church. Beginning in the 1980s and especially in the 1990s, Asian and Pacific leaders gathered together and their voices began to be heard.

National consultations were conducted from the late 1980s through 1990s, resulting in the compilation of comprehensive data on Asian and Pacific Catholic ministry and leadership. These were specifically directed to the leadership in the Asian and Pacific communities and participants included lay leaders, priests, deacons, sisters and brothers.

Many of the issues and concerns from these gatherings are reflected in the 2001 pastoral statement of the bishops' *Asian and Pacific Presence: Harmony in Faith*. The pastoral formation of Asian and Pacific leaders was a common thread in all the gatherings. By 2001, some major steps had been made to acknowledge and involve Asian and Pacific leaders in major events of the church and to bring their presence to the church at

large. Since 2001, three Asian bishops have been named in the U.S.: Ignatius Wang (an auxiliary bishop in San Francisco), Dominic Luong (auxiliary bishop in Orange), and Oscar Solis, a Filipino (as auxiliary bishop for Los Angeles).

Beginning in 2002, initiatives for an Asian and Pacific Institute were begun. The Office for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees, a department of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, has collaborated with a group of Asian Pacific community leaders, scholars, and pastoral ministers in designing, organizing, and implementing regional pilot programs. In 2003, the first Asian and Pacific Institutes Institute for Mission and Ministry were held in Chicago and New York. Programs will be held in Miami, Los Angeles, and San Francisco in 2004. Follow-up programs are being planned for Chicago and New York.

The Institute upholds an "Asian Pacific way" of building community, celebrating culture, developing leadership, and sharing faith. Yet, it works in partnership with dioceses and schools of ministry that currently offer other types of pastoral formation programs. The Institute gathers Asian and Pacific catechists, youth and young adult ministers, liturgists, chaplains, devotional group coordinators, and other pastoral leaders who serve Asian Pacific communities of faith.¹¹¹ Rooted in the daily life and struggle of Asian Pacific Catholic communities in the United States, the Institute is a collaborative teaching and learning experience that aims:

- to educate in faith, with emphasis on biblical and theological perspectives that reflect the various religious contexts, traditions, and practices of Asia and the Pacific;
- to promote a sense of community and collaboration among Asian Pacific leaders, pastoral ministers, and scholars;
- to develop cross-cultural competence by providing skills in intercultural communication, conflict management, immigrant acculturation, and race relations; and
- to advance lay ecclesial ministry toward full participation in U.S. church and society.

While progress has been made nationally and in some major dioceses, awareness and understanding of

¹¹¹These events are made possible through the collaborative support of the Office of Pastoral Care for Migrants and Refugees, the Arch/dioceses of Chicago, New York, Miami, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Catholic Theological Union, Fordham University, Mount St. Mary's College

Asian and Pacific communities is not widespread. Though the voices of local leaders have been heard through several national consultations that covered many dioceses and various Asian and Pacific groups, there is no office for Asian and Pacific Islanders (the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has a secretariat for Hispanic Affairs, a secretariat for Black Catholics, and an ad hoc committee for Native Americans). Meanwhile, the Office for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees (PCMR) addresses the concerns of recent immigrants; it has been instrumental in bringing together the various Asian and Pacific ministers; it has identified and implemented strategies for advancing leadership at the national level.

National organizations that promote ministry in the church, particularly those that accredit and certify pastoral ministers, have not addressed the issues and challenges of Asian and Pacific ministerial leadership. Most Roman Catholic seminaries, departments of

theology, and graduate programs for ministry have not intentionally participated in the training and formation of Asian and Pacific ministerial leaders (see appendix A). Presently, no academic guild, organization, or national program exists for Asian and Pacific ministers and scholars (e.g., Association of Catholic Hispanic Theologians in the United States or the Institute for Black Catholics).

Formation programs are clearly needed for Asian and Pacific Catholic ministerial leaders, both ordained and lay. With fewer priests and the limitations of priests from other countries who will return to their homelands, the role of lay pastoral ministers who are rooted in their communities becomes very crucial. The growth of leadership among Asian and Pacific ministers especially within their respective ethnic communities of faith can be nurtured and promoted in partnership with organizations that offer certification and accreditation programs.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Because of the vast Asian American diversity, it is dangerous to generalize the current status of Asian American ministerial leadership. It can be said, however, that over the last 20 years, Asian Americans have gained greater visibility within American Protestant and Catholic institutions. In general, Asian American congregations are thriving. Many Asian Americans have provided a renewing presence in Roman Catholic parishes. Asian American church leaders and scholars have produced numerous important theological reflections about the Asian American experience.

Yet the perennial question remains: In the face of the history and contemporary expressions of Orientalism in America, how can Asian Americans be integrated into American Christianity while retaining their cultural integrity? In other words, can Asian Americans avoid being treated as foreigners without being forced to give up what makes them distinctive? The response of American Christians to this question has implications for how they will relate to the emerging world Christianity.

In the meantime, Asian American church leaders play the difficult, but critical, role of mediating between their marginalized ethnic communities and the mainstream Church and society (in a few rare case, Asian American church leaders are called upon to exercise their gifts in the mainstream). Many leaders, particularly those who minister in more affluent Asian American contexts, can also choose to focus their resources and energies on guiding Asian American Christians independently. Whether they are immigrants themselves or are part of an emerging second generation, the trend among Protestant Asian Americans is towards denominational autonomy and evangelical identification. In contrast, Asian Americans appear to be better integrated into the Roman Catholic Church even though they continue to remain marginalized.

Viewed from within Asian American Christian communities, this study reveals that Asian American ministerial leadership is quite gifted and has reached a high level of achievement. Indigenous support struc-

tures and networks have been formed for both the immigrant and second generations. Innovative ministries are being started and led by Asian Americans (second generation leaders, in particular). Largely on their own initiative, Asian American leaders have engaged their denominations and have attended mainstream seminaries in numbers greater than the proportion of Asian Americans in the general population.

Nevertheless, from the mainstream perspective, Asian American ministerial leaders remain marginal and isolated. This is particularly true for many Asian American women pastors who experience further isolation from the male-oriented leadership of most Asian American congregations. While some seminaries and denominations provide Asian American specific programs, these institutions still don't provide adequate training for ministry in Asian American contexts or ministerial support for Asian American leaders. For instance, leadership is particularly needed in cultivating fresh approaches to worship in Asian America settings. But a distinctly Asian American "voice" in worship has yet to emerge. The genres of music, approaches to prayer and spirituality, sensibilities about gathering, distinct rituals, approaches to mission, or themes from Scripture that Asian American churches can call their own are few to none. Complicating this situation is the diversity of Asian American groups, which makes worship leadership development (as well as leadership programs of any other kind) an extraordinary challenge.

As this study attests, the challenge of calling out, equipping, supporting, and integrating Asian American ministerial leaders into the mainstream American church is rooted largely in inattention and ignorance. A comprehensive and empirically based research project is needed into the current state of Asian American Christians and their leadership. Such a project could provide an in-depth study of Asian Pacific Ministerial Leadership within an ecumenical and inter-religious framework. Such a project would be an exciting next step to build upon this preliminary study of the Asian and Pacific Islander Pulpit and Pew Project.

APPENDICES

ATS SEMINARIES WITH ASIAN AMERICAN PROGRAMS

Alliance Theological Seminary

Chinese Bi-Cultural Ministries
350 North Highland Avenue
Nyack, New York 10960
http://www.alliance.edu/chinese_min/
Contact Person:

American Baptist Seminary of the West

Asian American Center
2606 Dwight Way
Berkeley, CA 94704
(510) 841-1905 x242
<http://asianamericancenter.org>
Contact Person: Dr. Timothy Tseng

Carey Theological College

North American Chinese Church Ministries Program
5920 Iona Drive, Vancouver B.C., V6T 1J6
(604) 224-4308
(604) 224-5014
<http://www.careytheologicalcollege.ca/>
Contact Person: Dr. Joyce Chan, Director;
joycechan@careytheologicalcollege.ca

Claremont School of Theology

Center for Pacific and Asian American Ministries
1325 N. College Avenue
Claremont, CA 91711
(909) 621-7707; Fax 909-626-1208
<http://www.cst.edu/CPAAM/cpaamhome.htm>
Contact Person: Sung Do Kang

Fuller Theological Seminary

School of Theology and School of Intercultural
Studies Korean Studies
135 North Oakland Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91182
<http://www.fuller.edu/>
Contact Person:

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

Asian American Ministries
2121 Sheridan Road
Evanston, IL 60201
(847) 866-3900
Contact Person: Peter Suh

Gordon-Conwell Theological School

D.Min. in Ministry in the Asian American Context
D.Min. Office
130 Essex Street
South Hamilton, MA 01982
(978) 646-4163
<http://www.gordonconwell.edu/dmin/tracks/asian.php>
Contact Persons: Dr. Gary Parrett, Dr. Paul Lim, Dr.
Stephen Um

Logos Evangelical Seminary

Asian American Ministries Program
El Monte, CA 91731
(626) 312-3870
(626) 312-3871 ext.53
Contact Person: Rev. Anthony So, Director,
logosaam@les.edu
<http://www.logosaam.com/>

McCormick Theological Seminary

Center for Asian American Ministries
5460 South University Avenue
Chicago, IL 60615
(773) 947-6300
[http://www.mccormick.edu/mod.php?mod=userpage
&page_id=64&menu=1603](http://www.mccormick.edu/mod.php?mod=userpage&page_id=64&menu=1603)
<http://aadvent.mccormick.edu/>
Contact Person: President Cynthia Campbell

Princeton Theological Seminary

Asian American Program for Ministry
CN 821
Princeton, NJ 08542
(800) 622-6767
Director: Rev. Dr. Sang Hyun Lee
Assistant Director: Kevin Park

Regent College

Chinese Studies
5800 University Blvd.
Vancouver, B.C., Canada V6T 2E4
Phone: (604) 224-3245
Toll free: 1-800-663-8664
Fax: (604) 224-3097
[http://www.regent-
college.edu/prospectus/programs/chinese_studies.html](http://www.regent-college.edu/prospectus/programs/chinese_studies.html)
Contact Person: Dr. Edwin Hui

Tyndale College & Seminary

The Hudson Taylor Centre for Chinese Ministries
25 Ballyconnor Court
Toronto, ON M2M 4B3
(416) 226.6620, ext. 2223
(416) 226.9464
E-mail: nchau@tyndale.to
Contact Person: Rev. Warren Lai

Union Theological Seminary - PSCE

Asian American Ministry and Mission Center
3401 Brook Road
Richmond, VA 23227
(800) 229-2990; Fax 804-254-8056
<http://union-psce.edu/links/asian.shtml>
Contact Person: Rev. Dr. Syngman Rhee, Director

Western Seminary – San Jose Campus

Chinese Ministry Track
16330 Los Gatos Blvd. Suite 100
Los Gatos, CA 95032-4520
(800) 547-4546
<http://www.westernseminary.edu/AcademicPrograms/nc/programs.html>
Contact: Dr. Enoch Wan

Westminster Seminary (Philadelphia)

The SaRang Korean Missions Center
2960 Church Road
Glenside PA 19038
(800) 373-0119
<http://www.wts.edu/resources/sarang.html>
Contact Person: Dr. Sung-Il Steve Park

CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION FOR ASIANS IN THE UNITED STATES

According to the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, there were approximately 30,000 lay ecclesial ministers, signifying more than a 30 percent increase during an eight year period studied. About 30,000 more are pursuing ministry degrees or completing certification across the country.

Presently, there are no graduate degree programs in Asian American theology and ministry that are comparable to initiatives for African Americans at the Institute for Black Catholics at Xavier University in New Orleans, La., or for Latinos/Hispanics at Boston College in Massachusetts, University of Notre Dame in Indiana, University of San Diego in California, and the Mexican American Cultural Center in Texas. However, some institutions are beginning to offer courses from Asian and Asian American perspectives that are taught both by Asian and non-Asian professors. For instance, at the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley, Dr. Kenan Osborne, OFM teaches a course entitled Contemporary Asian Theology.

Roman Catholic scholars from Asia and the Pacific are emerging partners in the task of shaping US immigrant theology and preparing Asian leaders for ministry. Among those who teach in seminaries, universities, and graduate programs of ministry are as follows:

Dr. Ruben Habito, a native of the Philippines, teaches at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. He holds a doctorate in Buddhist Philosophy from Tokyo University. He is the first Roman Catholic to receive a kensho from a Japanese master. He engages in Zen-Christian dialogue, particularly in his books, such as *Total Liberation: Zen Spirituality and the Social Dimension*, and *Healing Breath: Zen Spirituality for a Wounded Earth*.

Faustino Cruz, SM teaches at the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley, Calif. Dr. Cruz has

ministered in migrant and refugee communities for over 20 years as priest, community organizer and educator in the United States, Latin America, and the Philippines. His teaching and learning interests include: contextual theologies, congregational studies, immigration history, ethnic studies, and intercultural education. Currently, he is writing a book on Filipino Catholics. He received an Interdisciplinary Doctorate in Theology and Education from Boston College.

Alexis Navarro, IHM taught Theology at Mount Saint Mary's College in Los Angeles, Calif., where she was also director of the Graduate Religious Studies program. She graduated from the University of Saint Michael's College of the University of Toronto in Canada. She is a second-generation Filipina American.

Dr. Seung Ai Yang was born in Korea and has been in the United States since 1984. A graduate of the University of Chicago Divinity School, she taught New Testament at the Jesuit School of Theology and the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, Calif. Presently, she is Associate Professor of Old Testament at St. Paul Seminary School of Divinity of the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minn. Author of several articles, her research examines the theology of the Book of Job and Asian biblical interpretation.

Another scholar from Korea is **Dr. Anselm Kyongsuk Min** of Claremont Graduate University. His scholarship focuses on contemporary constructive theology, theological method, theologies of liberation, religious pluralism, and Asian theologies. He published *Dialectic of Salvation: Issues in Theology of Liberation* and is writing *Nature, Grace, Glory: Aquinas's Trinitarian Theology of Creation*. He received two doctoral degrees: PhD in Theology from Vanderbilt University; and PhD in Philosophy from Fordham University.

Dr. Van Pham is a visiting professor at Xavier University, where she teaches from a particular perspective as a lay Vietnamese scholar of Women and Religion. Like her husband, Jonathan Tan, she received her doctorate from the Catholic University of America.

Peter Phan came to the United States as a refugee from Vietnam. A recipient of three earned doctorates, he holds the Ignacio Ellacuria, SJ Chair in Catholic Social Thought at Georgetown University in Washington, DC. Dr. Phan has written books, edited twenty volumes, and published over 250 essays. He is the general editor of *Theology from Global Perspectives*, a 20-volume series for Orbis Press, as well as 15-volume series on Ethnic American Catholics for Paulist Press.

Malaysian-born theologian **Dr. Jonathan Tan** is the first Asian professor to join the faculty of Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio. His research is in the area of East Asian religions, interreligious dialogue, and religious pluralism. He received a master's degree in theology from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, Calif. and a doctorate in Religion and Culture from the Catholic University of America.

In addition to the theologians mentioned above, several Roman Catholic scholars in other disciplines have also engaged in the study of Asian and Pacific ministry in the United States. They include:

Dr. Ruth Narita-Doyle is a Senior Research Scholar at Fordham University in New York. She was Director of the Archdiocese of New York Office for Pastoral Research and Planning. She has served as national consultant for ministry with Japanese Catholics for the USCCB. She holds a doctorate in Sociology from Fordham University.

Rev. Jose Arong, OMI is a native of the Philippines. For many years, he served as liaison between the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines. He has a PhD from Stanford University. He is an adjunct faculty at the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley and Saint Patrick Seminary and University in Menlo Park, Calif.

Rev. Martin duc Tran, SS is a priest from Vietnam. He holds a Doctorate in Sacred Theology from Rome and taught Sacred Scriptures at Saint Patrick's Seminary and University in Menlo Park, CA. Currently, he ministers in the Diocese of Orange, Calif.

05/06

ABOUT PULPIT & PEW

Pulpit & Pew is a research initiative of the Duke Divinity School funded by Lilly Endowment, Inc., and aimed at strengthening the quality of pastoral leadership (clergy and lay) in churches across America. The goal of the research is to strengthen the quality of pastoral leaders, especially those in ordained ministry, through (1) understanding how changes in the social, cultural, economic, and religious context in recent years have affected ministry, (2) forming pastoral leaders with the capacity for continual learning and growth in response to these changes, and (3) identifying policies and practices that will support creative pastoral leadership and vital congregations as they respond to a changing environment.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The Rev. Dr. Timothy Tseng is associate professor of American religious history and director of the Asian American Center at the American Baptist Seminary of the West, Berkeley, Calif. Born in Taiwan and raised in New York City, he has a B.A. from New York University and a M.Div. and Ph.D. from Union Theological Seminary. His research and teaching interests include 20th century Protestantism, Reformation Christianity, history of racial ideologies in America, Asian and Asian-American Christianity, and race and religion in the United States. He has served on the boards of the American Baptist Churches and the American Baptist Historical Society and as president of the Asian American Baptist Caucus.

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